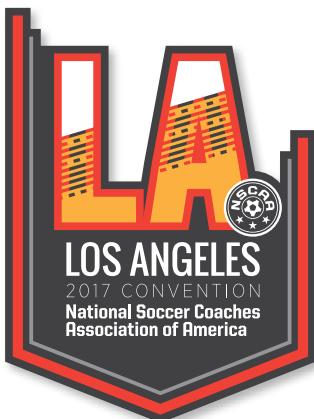


# SOUVENIR SOCCER COACHING MANUAL

// 2017 NSCAA Convention



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



## MANUAL CONTRIBUTORS

4

## ATTACKING, TRANSITIONS, & COUNTER ATTACKS

40

## LETTER FROM DAVID & IAN

8

## FUTSAL MENTOR & YOUTH COACH DIPLOMA

9

- + What is Futsal? // 10
- + Characteristics of Futsal // 10 - 11
- + Rules & Regulations // 12
- + Player Development Benefits // 13
- + Popular Formations // 14 - 15
- + Technical Sessions // 16 - 27
- + Tactical Sessions // 28 - 39

## SPEED OF PLAY DIPLOMA

68

- + Speed of Play Theory // 68
- + Training Sessions // 69 - 91



**ADVANCED YOUTH  
COACHING DIPLOMA**

**93**

- + Diploma Overview // 94
- + The Development Cycle // 95
- + Warm-up Activity // 96 - 97
- + Training Sessions // 98 - 119

**TECHNICAL TRAINING  
& SMALL SIDED  
GAMES DIPLOMA**

**120**

- + Overview & Player Benefits // 121
- + Learning Pathways // 122 - 123
- + Training Sessions // 124 - 147

**MINDSET -  
CULTIVATING A MASTER  
COACHING MENTALITY**

**148**

- + Mindset - Cultivating a Master Coaching Mentality // 149
- + Beat Me Twice // 150
- + Training Sessions // 150 - 161

**PLAYBOOK -  
NUMBERING, SYSTEMS,  
& FORMATIONS**

**162**

- + Playbook & Coaching Benefits // 163
- + Coach Newbery's U12 Playbook // 164
- + Numbering Systems // 165 - 167
- + Formations // 168 - 172

**PRINCIPLES OF PLAY -  
ATTACKING & DEFENDING**

**173**

- + Create & Deny Space // 174
- + Principles of Play & Game Concepts // 175
- + A New Conceptual Framework // 176
- + Creating Activities Focused on Defending & Attacking // 177

**INTEGRATING ANALYSIS  
TO ENHANCE PLAYER &  
TEAM PERFORMANCE**

**178**

- + Player & Team Performance // 179
- + How Analysis is Utilized // 179
- + Information Retention // 180
- + Coaching Behavior // 181



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David Newbery is the Managing Director of Coaching Media Group, and is the Coordinator of the NSCAA Club Standards Project Coordinator and eLearning. Since 1988, David has studied and worked in youth education, soccer development and coaching. David has been providing consultant services and support to volunteer based youth programs for the past 10 years, helping clubs to become more serious about player and coach development. David contributes articles regularly to soccer publications, has written books focusing on player and coach development and presents at national soccer events. In a volunteer capacity David coaches his son and daughter's soccer teams in the Rhode Island State leagues and the regional New England Premiership.



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Ian Barker has been at the NSCAA since early 2012. Before accepting the position of Director of Coaching Education for the NSCAA he served as Men's Soccer Coach at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. He also has collegiate coaching experience at the University of Wisconsin, serving as an assistant coach from 1989-1996. In the 1995 season the Badgers won both the Big Ten and NCAA National Championships. From 1997-2007 Coach Barker served as the Director of Coaching and Player Development for the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYS). Coach Barker has served on the national instructional staff for the NSCAA, US Soccer and US Youth Soccer. His formal coaching qualifications come from the NSCAA, US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, the English FA and the German DFB.



**IAN DONNELLY //** Managing  
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Contributor: Integrating analysis to enhance player and team performance + Integrating analysis to enhance coaching behavior

Ian Donnelly has been immersed in the area of Performance Analysis (PA) in Soccer for more than 20 years, both as an analyst and in the development of video analysis technology for coaches and educators. He is an integral member of ISPAS (International Society of Performance Analysis in Sport) and has been at the forefront of the growth and development of Performance Analysis at all levels of the game. With a background in both education and coaching, Ian was instrumental in the development of the world's first interactive video analysis software for coaches. He continues to harness the latest computer and video technology to enhance both player development and coaching effectiveness in his current role as Managing Director at Performance Innovation. In the area of Coach Education, Ian provides analysis expertise and support to a growing number of National Associations in Europe on their UEFA license courses, and with the NSCAA, who are now fully integrating performance analysis into their coaching development programs.



**MAREN McCRARY //** Technical  
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Contributor: Advanced Youth Coaching Diploma

Maren McCrary was a two-time ('98 and '99) NSCAA Division I All-America Forward at Brigham Young University where she is still the school's second all-time leading scorer and first soccer player inducted into the BYU Hall of Fame. After graduating, McCrary, then known as Maren Hendershot, played professionally for the San Jose CyberRays and Carolina Courage in the first American professional league, the WUSA. After retiring, McCrary got involved in coaching and has coached Division I, club and high school soccer. McCrary is currently the Director of Coaching for Nebraska State Soccer, the Region 2 ODP Girls Head Coach, and Head Coach for the College of Saint Mary Women's Soccer team. McCrary holds a USSF A license, National Youth License and a bachelor's degree in Communications from BYU.



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Contributor: Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma

Vince has been coaching youth soccer for 25 years, High School for 15 years (boys and girls) and was the women's coach at Bethel College (women). He served as the director of coaching education at Indiana Soccer from 2001-2011 and is a Member of the NSCAA Academy Staff and US Soccer's National Staff. His current roles includes, NSCAA-Education Content Coordinator and Education Director for Indy Premier Soccer Club. Ganzberg's licenses include, NSCAA Premier Diploma, USSF "A" License, US Youth Soccer National Youth License and he is a Certified Teacher. Vince resides in Brownsburg, Indiana. He has a wife, Amy, one son, and two stepdaughters.



**JIM FLEETING //** Director of  
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Contributor: Advanced Youth Coaching Diploma

Currently the Director of Football Development/ Technical Director, Jim was appointed in 2006 and is responsible for the management and development of all programs and staff within the Football Development department. With over 40 years' experience as a player, coach and developer in the game, Jim has led the redevelopment of coach education from the grassroots level through to the highly acclaimed Scottish / UEFA Pro-License course.



**NEIL HULL //**  
National, Academy Staff, NSCAA

Contributor: Attacking Transition and Counter Attacks Diploma

Neil Hull has been coaching for 28 years in numerous countries. He has earned coaching qualifications offered by the NSCAA, Coerver Coaching and licensing with USSF and English FA. Neil has coached at Club, High School, College, Regional Olympic Development pool and National levels. He is a graduate of the University of Texas- San Antonio in Kinesiology. He has the privilege of being on the NSCAA's National Academy Staff and a member of their National Technical Committee. A highlight of his career being awarded the NSCAA Coach of the Year by his peers: He is the NSCAA's State Director for Texas, educating to date over 5000 coaches at the Level 1-6, National and Advance National levels of soccer in both field and goalkeeping disciplines. Along with his position as Director of the Players Academy of Soccer Skills (PASS), he is Professor at the University of Texas San Antonio, teaching the fundamentals of soccer and soccer coaching methodologies. Proudly Coach Hull is a Military Veteran serving his country for over 14 years in the Royal Army Physical Training Corps.



**BEN FREAKLEY //**  
General Manager, Tormenta FC

Contributor: Mindset Cultivating a Master Coach Mentality + "Beat Me Twice" Bringing the competitive mindset into individual, group and team defending.

For over 15 years Ben Freakley has worked with elite athletes, soldiers and business people as a NCAA College Soccer Coach and Performance Psychology Consultant for Special Operations Forces. In 2013 he founded Ready. Set. Resilient, a consulting company aimed at helping individuals and teams optimize leadership, routines and culture. Freakley holds several licenses and diplomas through the USSF and NSCAA including an A license and Premier Diploma. He also holds a CSCS diploma from the National Strength and Conditioning Association. Freakley holds Masters Degrees in Sport Management and Sport Psychology. Freakley currently serves as Head Coach and General Manager of TormentaFC in the Premier Development League and is an Associate National Staff Instructor with the NSCAA.



**PAUL MARCO //** Head Men's Soccer Coach, Binghamton University

Contributor: Speed of Play Diploma

Paul Marco is the head soccer coach at Binghamton University and has led the team to two America East Conference titles, two America East regular season titles and a conference-record six consecutive appearances in the America East championship. Prior to his arrival at Binghamton, Paul was the head coach at West Virginia from 1996-2001. Paul is a former Division I player for West Virginia, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in physical education. He is teacher certified in grades K-12. Marco also received his master's degree from West Virginia University in 1994 in physical education/athletic coaching. Besides holding a National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Advanced National Diploma and a United States Soccer Federation (USSF) "B" License, Marco has been a member of the NSCAA national staff for 14 years.



**CHRISTIAN LAVERS //**  
Executive Vice President, US Club Soccer

Contributor: Speed of Play Diploma

Christian Lavers is the Executive Vice President of US Club Soccer and the President of the Elite Clubs National League. He is an assistant coach with the Chicago Red Stars of the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL), and has worked with several US Soccer youth national teams. As a coach he has led teams to National Final Fours at 5 different levels – the ECNL National Finals, the USYS National Championships (2011 U18 Champions), the USASA National Championships, the W-League, and the WPSL.



**DONALD GILLIES //** Football Development Manager, Scottish FA

Contributor: Advanced Youth Coaching Diploma

Donald is currently the Football Development Manager at the Scottish FA. His remit revolves around the management and development of grassroots projects supporting the game in Scotland. A graduate of University of Strathclyde, he acted as Senior Coach of the South West Region Scottish FA's girl's elite player development program for 8 years until 2014. Additionally, he oversees the International Coach Education program that seeks to support coaches, organizations and national associations throughout the world sharing methods and data on how the coaching community can be improved.



**NATHAN WILLIAMS //** Girls Academy Coaching Director, Carolina Rapids Soccer Club

Contributor: Speed of Play Diploma

Current coaching Director at the Carolina Raids Soccer Club in North Carolina, overseeing the player development of the elite girls U14 –U18. He is also the head Men's and Women's coach at Providence High School. Prior to moving to NC, Nathan spent 10 years as the Executive Director at Placer United in Sacramento, California. A number of additional roles through his career have seen him serve as the Head Coach of the U18 and U16 Development Academy, ECNL Director as well as being a part of the US Soccer's Youth National Team scouting network for the U15 girls. Nathan has been a part of the NSCAA National staff for the past five years. He Hold his USSF "A" License, NSCAA Premier Diploma and the UEFA "B" (Level 3)



# MANUAL CONTRIBUTORS



**COURTNEY SIRMANS // Assistant Coach, Rice University Women's Soccer**

Contributor: Attacking Transition and Counter Attacks Diploma

Courtney Sirmans has been working at Rice University since the Summer of 2015. Her main focuses with the owls are recruiting, film sessions, and practice planning. Sirmans spent two seasons coaching at the University of Massachusetts where she helped the Minutewomen post back to back Atlantic-10 tournament appearances. A 2008 graduate of the University of Dayton, Sirmans spent the 2012 season coaching at her alma mater. Prior to Dayton, she served three years as an assistant at Wright State from 2009-2011 where she helped in all aspects of the program. During her time as an undergraduate at Dayton, Sirmans appeared in 75 games with 59 starts and logged eight goals and 11 assists in her four years. Sirmans has extensive club coaching experience as she has worked with clubs in Dayton and Cincinnati Ohio, along with western Massachusetts, and the Houston area. She has her USSF B License, NSCAA Premiere Diploma, and was part of the NSCAA 2016 30 Under 30 class. Sirmans is also a NSCAA Associate staff and Region I ODP staff member.



**SAMANTHA SNOW // Executive Director, Georgia Soccer Partners**

Contributor: Speed of Play Diploma

Samantha Snow is the Executive Director for Georgia Soccer Partners and oversees the operations of Bluesprings Youth Soccer Association, Snellville Youth Soccer Association, Liberty Soccer Club and Creekside Sports Center. Before arriving at GSP, Sam spent ten years coaching college soccer, seven as a head coach. Sam coaches ODP with Georgia Soccer and joined the Region I Girls ODP Staff for Summer ID camps in 2011, 2012 and 2014. She is a course instructor for Georgia Soccer and an NSCAA associate staff instructor. Sam joined the NSCAA in 2007 and was a recipient of the Walter Chyzowich Memorial Scholarship in 2007. She was honored in the second class of the NSCAA 30 Under 30 Program and is a member of the Strategic Team for the NSCAA Women's Coaching Community. She has a USSF A License and National GK License, NSCAA Premier Diploma and DOC Diploma.



**RENE MIRAMONTES // Director of Coaching, San Diego Crusaders S.C.**

Contributor: Attacking Transition and Counter Attacks Diploma

René Miramontes brings almost 40 years of experience to the game. He has maintained his A license from US Soccer since 1988 and his Premier Diploma since 2000. As an instructor he has taught courses for both US Soccer and the NSCAA. He has been a member of US Soccer National Instructional Staff since 1995. He has coached at several levels of the game from youth to college and the MLS. While in the MLS he worked 4 years as an assistant to Glenn "Mooch" Myernick, reaching the MLS finals in 1997 and the US Open Cup in 1998. After his second stint with US Soccer fulltime staff and working in the newly formed US Developmental Academy, he returned to the youth game in San Diego for the Crusaders Soccer Club, where he is now the director of coaching. As a player, he was a four-year letterman for San Diego State U, where he captained the team the last two seasons to a combined 26-7-4 record. He also played 3 seasons semi-pro in the Western Alliance League.



**JASON SISNEROS // Director of Match Analysis, UNC Women's Soccer**

Contributor: Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma

Jason Sisneros has spent the past five seasons working with the University of North Carolina women's soccer program. During this time, he has served as Director of Match Analysis, Assistant Coach and Assistant Recruiting Coordinator. As a member of the staff, Jason was part of the Tar Heels 2012 National Championship and 2013 ACC Regular Season Title. Aside from college, Jason has been a youth soccer coach for the past twenty years, coaching middle school and high school soccer as well. He holds an NSCAA Premier Diploma and is an active contributor to the NSCAA's online educational platforms. This is Jason's fourth year presenting at the NSCAA Convention.



**DONALD PARK // Head of Coach Education, Scottish FA**

Contributor: Advanced Youth Coaching Diploma

Donald is the current Head of Coach Education overseeing the program from Grassroots to Elite level and is a key deliver of the UEFA accredited licenses. With over 40 years' experience in the professional game as a player, coach and developer he is also a member of the UEFA Jiri Panel (Responsible for UEFA Coach Education). He is a major influence in the development of the Scottish FA courses at our bespoke children's and goal keeping pathway as well as former National Team and Youth National Teams assistant coach.

**MARK SPIEGEL // Academy Director, South Central Soccer Academy**

Contributor: Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma

Mark Spiegel is currently the Academy Director at South Central Soccer Academy in Indiana and the founder of Make Your Own Ball Day. Spiegel grew up in Kansas City, Mo and played 4 years of varsity for Lee's Summit North HS before moving onto compete at Butler University. Spiegel was a member of the NSCAA 30 Under 30 program in 2014 and is also a passionate volunteer coach with TOPSoccer.



**ERIC OMAN // League Technical Director, Puget Sound Premier League**

Contributor: Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma

Erik Oman is an NSCAA Academy Staff Coach who resides near Seattle, Washington. When he is not teaching courses for the NSCAA, Erik serves as the League Technical Director for the Puget Sound Premier League in Washington and North Idaho and works with Major League Soccer as a Professional Match Evaluator. Erik also works as a consultant, advising numerous clubs and organizations in developing coaching education programming, curriculum, parent educational programming and organizational strategic planning. With nearly thirty years of professional experience in the game, Erik has coached and directed programs from local youth levels to state and regional ODP, state associations, college programs and semi-professional teams. His experience has led to consulting opportunities with Microsoft and other corporate organizations. He holds a NSCAA Premier Diploma as well as a US Soccer A License, National Goalkeeper Coaching License and National Youth License among his credentials.



**BILL SAMPAIO // National Coaching Director, U.S. Futsal**

Contributor: Futsal Mentor & Youth Coach Diploma

Bill, a native of Brazil, has significant experience as a player and coach in soccer and in Futsal. Sampaio was a Division I soccer player at the College of Industrial Engineering and a semi-professional player in the LUSO American Soccer League. In addition, Bill has played and coached at the State, Regional and National Futsal Championships. He has achieved success in the youth and men's divisions as well as in international competition. Sampaio has worked with youth academies in several professional clubs such as Juventus and Corinthians of Brazil and the New England Revolution in U.S.A. In addition, Sampaio was a 'disciple' of Professor Ricardo Lucena, considered one of the most influential professional futsal coaches in the world, Professor Ferretti and Professor Marco Bruno. Sampaio has published a book and DVD focusing on Futsal, both entitled Futsal Training System and is the Chairman of U.S. Futsal Coaching Committee.



**IAN MULLINER // Technical Director, Mass Mouth Soccer**

Contributor: Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma

Prior to his role with Massachusetts Youth Soccer, Ian Mulliner served as the Director of Coaching of Illinois Youth Soccer Association for over ten years. Originally from Manchester, England. Ian has been coaching in the U.S. since 1992. He coached at St. Charles Soccer Club, Wheaton Whigs SC and was Director of Coaching for Northwest United Soccer Club. As the Illinois Youth Soccer Director of Coaching, Ian was responsible for growth in the association's Coaching Education Program and developed the coaching curriculum for the Illinois Olympic Development Program. He was also responsible for developing a coaching curriculum for Illinois Youth Soccer's Inner-city program. He has been involved as an instructor on US Youth Soccer and US Soccer Federation national coaching courses and is a vocal proponent of professional coaching development. Ian has served as the Region II Coaching Committee Chairman and a member of the National Coaching Committee for US Youth Soccer. He has served as the Region II Olympic Development Program Development Age Head Coach and also as a Staff Coach on both the Boys' and the Girls' programs. He holds the USSF "A" License and National Youth License, F.I.F.A Futuro III certificate, F.A. Preliminary Coaching Award as well as the Dutch KNVB Coach's License.



**JASON PENDLETON // Technical Director, KC Fusion**

Contributor: Attacking Transition and Counter Attacks Diploma

Jason Pendleton is currently the head boy's and girls' soccer coach at Blue Valley Southwest High School in Overland Park, KS. He has been a HS coach for 22 years. He is also the Technical Director for the KC Fusion Soccer club, a volunteer assistant coach for Baker University Women's team and the Co-Director for Coerver GPS (Kansas and Nebraska). Jason is on the NSCAA National Staff and has presented at the NSCAA National convention on 3 separate occasions. He holds the NSCAA Premier Diploma and the US Soccer "C" License.



**DR. TOM PARRY // Assistant Professor, College of Charleston**

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Tom Parry is currently a professor of exercise science, with an emphasis in skill learning and coaching methodology at the College of Charleston, SC. His research emphasis is on the influence of practice, feedback and instruction on performance and how activity design can influence performance and learning. He has presented and published on these topics at the national level and recently published an article in the NSCAA Soccer Journal on the Reconceptualization of the Principles of Play. Tom holds a USSF "C" license and has coached at the college, high school and MRL club level.



# INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Coach,

Thank you for purchasing this Coaching manual. The manual was developed to supplement 23 practical coaching clinics and theory workshops offered at 2017 National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Convention. This first-of-a-kind issue, is an ideal purchase for coaches attending the annual coaching event and includes 66 full color coaching activity plans and manuscripts summarizing 12 workshop sessions - all focused on **youth player development**.

For coaches attending the convention, the manual is a terrific way to remember many of the top-class presentations and outstanding education experiences - a souvenir that can be referenced for years to come. For thousands of coaches around the world unable to visit Los Angeles in January, 2017, this publication also serves as an historical account of the event and one way to participate with the largest gathering of coaches in the world.

More than twenty individuals contributed to the manual, full-time coaching practitioners carefully chosen to represent a wide variety of youth development disciplines. Common to all presenters is our commitment to support coaching education and participate in raising player development standards. Ian and I express our deep appreciation for their dedication to this project and enthusiasm for coaching education in general. We would also like to thank KwikTactix for providing our presenters with the software used to produce the outstanding activity images used in the manual. The manual includes a review of five Special Topics Diplomas, each with a manuscript summarizing the sessions and 12 activity plans:

1. Futsal Mentor & Youth Coach Diploma.
2. Attacking Transition and Counter Attacks Diploma.
3. Speed of Play Diploma.
4. Advanced Youth Coaching Diploma.
5. Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma.

Additionally, the manual includes a manuscript for seven classroom workshops offered as electives, including:

- Cultivating a Master Coach Mentality
- "Beat Me Twice" - Bringing the Competitive Mindset into Individual, Group and Team defending.
- 4v4 & 7v7 Playbook - Systems, Formations and Numbering.
- 9v9 & 11v11 Playbook - Systems, Formations and Numbering.
- Attacking and Defending Principles of Play.
- Integrating Analysis to Enhance Player and Team Performance.
- Integrating Analysis to Enhance Coaching Behavior.

This manual is produced by NSCAA Education Department and is part of our commitment to deliver convenient coaching education in a variety of methods – methods reflecting different learning styles and interest levels of our members. Our priority is to present vibrant and engaging content in a low cost eLearning format to supplement and enhance existing NSCAA courses and events. It is now possible for a coach, at their convenience, to participate in highly informative and tremendously interesting courses and presentations and receive formal recognition/credit for participation. Benefits of eLearning are considerable, both for the individual and NSCAA. To learn more about NSCAA eLearning, visit [www.NSCAA.com/eLearning](http://www.NSCAA.com/eLearning).

We hope you enjoy the manual. Please don't hesitate to provide us with your comments and questions.

Kind Regards,

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What is Futsal? // 10

Characteristics of Futsal // 10-11

Rules & Regulations // 12

Player Development Benefits // 13

Popular Formations // 14-15

Technical Sessions // 16-27

Tactical Sessions // 28-39



# FUTSAL MENTOR & YOUTH COACH DIPLOMA

CONTRIBUTIONS BY: BILL SAMPAIO & DAVID NEWBERY

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The following is an abstract from the Futsal Mentor and Youth Coaching Diploma theory session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. To earn the diploma, a participant was required to attend one theory and two practical sessions focussing on attacking transitions and counter attacking, plus attend 2 other elective sessions from the convention offering.



## WHAT IS FUTSAL?

Futsal is a fast paced, action-packed, electrifying game with many similarities to soccer and can be played indoors and outdoors. According to Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), Futsal is the fastest growing indoor sport in the world. Played on a court similar in size to a basketball court, a typical match is played between two teams with five players on the court at one time, including a goalkeeper and four outfield players. Futsal can be played in any climate or conditions and is a year round sport. Urban areas are particularly attractive for Futsal as the game requires minimum space and makes good use of existing hard surfaces such as basketball, handball and tennis courts.



## CHARACTERISTICS OF FUTSAL - IMPLICATIONS FOR COACHING

As youth coaches we are often influenced by the tactics and strategies engaged by successful coaches working with elite level performers. Popular approaches at the present time are quite different than 15-20 years ago. Examples of this include multiple adaptations to traditional systems of play, utilization of wingers on the opposite flank to their dominant/preferred foot and the evolution of new roles such as a defensive midfield player. Once we have selected our preferred strategies (or had them selected for us), we must adapt our coaching methodologies to transfer our knowledge and beliefs to our players. Occasionally a departure from the normal methods may expedite the learning process and lead to a more enjoyable experience for players and coaches. Futsal can provide an ideal alternative

and sometimes superior environment for soccer coaches seeking to introduce and consolidate key concepts. Here are a few suggestions:

**Two-way players:** Often in soccer, units of the team will not be actively involved in defending or attacking sequences. This is rarely the case in Futsal. All five players are required to participate in both phases of play, imposing greater physical, cognitive and technical demands on players.

**1v1 player:** Somewhat similar to the tactics employed in basketball, coaches will bounce between man-marking and zonal defensive strategies. Inevitably, players will find themselves face to face with a single opponent and the ability to succeed in the 1v1 duel will impact



## THE PLAYING AREA

**The Futsal Court:** A flat, smooth and non-abrasive surface - made of wood or artificial material.

**Dimensions:** For non-international games: length 25 meter (m) - 42m; Width 16m - 25m.

**Touch Lines:** Two longer boundary lines.

**Goal Lines:** Two shorter lines.

**Penalty Area:** A 6m arch from each goal line.

**Second Penalty Mark:** 10m from each goal line.

**Substitution zones:** In front of the team benches 5m in length.



## BALL & EQUIPMENT

**Ball:** The ball is weighted and low bounce with a circumference 62-64cm (similar to a size 4 soccer ball), 400-440g weight.

**Goals:** 3m between the posts and 2m tall.



## PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

**Players:** 2 teams, each consisting of no more than 5 players on the court - one of whom is the goalkeeper.

**Substitutes:** Varies depending on the competition.

**Referees:** Typically 2 referees and a timekeeper.

the effectiveness of that player. An effective attacking player will beat their opponent and create a desirable numerical advantage. Conversely, a defender that is capable of slowing down an attack and keeping attacking sequences in front of the defensive unit is equally as valuable to a team.

**Counterattacks:** A feature of the modern game of soccer is teams conceding possession of the ball to an opponent and defending with a compact shape in front of the goal. There are other approaches to attacking that are successful: a counterattack strategy has become quite widespread and popular at all levels of the game. The back and forth (attack-defend-attack) tempo is a feature of futsal and key coaching strategies beneficial to soccer can be straightforwardly emphasized. The majority of goals scored in futsal are scored immediately following a turnover when the attacking team is able to create a numerical or positional advantage.

**High-pressure defending:** One way to stop a counterattack is to prevent the counterattack from occurring. Instead of dropping back into a compact shape, the coach can train the team to defend much higher up the court with full pressure, seeking to win back possession close to the opponent's goal. This is not straightforward, for several players must move simultaneously to create a numerical advantage around the ball and deny the opposition space. Coordinating player's movement, working on verbal and non-verbal communication and helping to maintain adequate distances between players can be explored to great effect on the futsal court and transferred to an outdoor field.

**Creating space:** Teaching young players movement when not in possession of the ball is a challenging task. All too often soccer players will pass and then stop to admire it, instead of moving effortlessly to support a teammate. Due to the nature of the game and space limitations on the court, futsal players become adept at creating space. It certainly seems more intuitive for a young player to move to the sidelines on a futsal court to create width and forward to establish height than to achieve the same principles on a soccer field. Cuts, bumps and body fakes are used significantly by individuals to create some daylight from an opponent to receive a pass. Movement rotations of three outfield players are also commonplace when a teammate has the ball. Futsal is an ideal format for soccer coaches to teach individual and team movement to create space as these are prerequisite to futsal success.

**Goalkeeper's offensive contributions:** with only 5 players from each team on the court, futsal coaches regularly aim to create numerical overloads in the attack. When a team has developed controlled progression and/or the opponent is defending deep in their own half, it is not uncommon to see the goalkeeper enter into the attacking half of the field. Depending on the tactical formation, the goalkeeper will take on the role of the center player to allow teammates to move into deeper attacking positions. Although there is risk, commitment to this strategy has developed competent and confident keepers with exceptional foot skills – a real asset for keepers in modern soccer.



## ABBREVIATED RULES & REGULATIONS

The following is a list of select rules and regulations - for a comprehensive account for official FIFA Futsal rules visit [www.FIFA.com](http://www.FIFA.com) or [www.futsal.com](http://www.futsal.com).



### FREE KICKS & RESTARTS

**Kick-off:** a kick off from the center starts the game at the beginning of each half and after a goal has been scored. A goal cannot be scored directly from the kick-off. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.

**Direct free kick:** is taken from the place where the offence occurred.

**Penalty kick:** is awarded for offenses committed inside the penalty area.

**Corner kick:** restart after a ball crosses the goal line from a defender's last touch.

**Kick-in:** Restart from the touch line. The ball must be stationary and the kicker has 4 seconds to re-enter the ball onto the pitch. A goal may not be scored directly.

**Indirect free kick:** The indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.

**Defending distance from free kicks:** at least 5m from the ball.

**Defending distance from accumulated free kicks:** the Keeper must remain in the penalty area at least 5m from the ball (but can come off the goal line). Other players must remain behind an imaginary line 5m from the ball.

**Defending distance from penalty kicks:** the keeper must remain on the goal line. All other players must remain behind an imaginary 5m from the ball.

**Goal clearance:** restart after a ball crosses the goal line from an attacker's last touch. The ball is thrown from any point inside the penalty area by the goalkeeper within 4 seconds.



### TIME & SUBSTITUTION REGULATIONS

**Duration** - the game is two equal periods of 20 minutes.

**Time out** – both teams are entitled to a 1 minute time-out in each period.

**Substitutions (subs)** - may be made at any time, on the fly'. A player must leave the court via the team's substitution zone before a 'sub' enters. If a sub enters the pitch before the player being replaced has left the player is cautioned.



### FOULS & PENALTIES

**Accumulated fouls** – A team committing 6 or more fouls in one half reach the 'accumulated fouls' threshold. Beginning with the sixth accumulated the opponent is awarded a direct kick from the point of the foul (if within 10m of the goal) or from the second penalty spot (if outside of 10m).

**Caution, sending off and replacement** - a yellow card is used to communicate that a player or sub has been cautioned and a red card for sending a player off. A sub may replace a sent off player after two minutes of playing time has elapsed since the sending-off or if a goal is scored by the opponent.

**Pass back to the keeper** – once a keeper has distributed the ball, the keeper cannot touch it again (with hands or feet) in his/her own half of the pitch if the ball has been deliberately played back by a team-mate without an opponent playing or touching it. An indirect free kick is awarded.



## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF FUTSAL

The physical, cognitive and social benefits of futsal for children are substantial:

1. With only five players per each team on a relatively small court the chances of a player being in close proximity to the ball, touching the ball, frequently getting into scoring opportunities and having the chance to play 1v1 attack and defense are enhanced.
2. Players are six times more likely to touch the ball in futsal than 11v11 soccer.
3. Goalkeepers generally are called into action frequently to make a high number of spectacular saves with all parts of their body.
4. A hard surface and heavier/low bounce futsal ball conditions players to pass to feet and along the ground, thus increasing the tempo and frequency of passing combinations between players.
5. Receiving and gaining control of a futsal ball is slightly easier than a soccer ball as it responds to the player's touch with less "life". Consequently, the ball is likely to stay in play longer and players will be less inclined to 'punt the ball' aimlessly.
6. Although there are some distinctions in the rules, approaches and techniques between futsal and outdoor soccer, there are many aspects of futsal performance that are transferable and can enhance soccer performance. For example, techniques such as beating or escaping an opponent and creating space with fakes/bumps and runs off the ball will occur far more often in futsal than soccer.
7. Space is inevitably tight on a futsal court and opportunities to get behind the defense limited. Consequently, players are required to create and utilize space using quick ball movements, switches of play and creativity.
8. Futsal is not just a game of attacking flare. Man-to-man and zonal defensive strategies are used interchangeably by coaches to match up with tactical adjustments by opponents and to create preferable matchups. Players must be familiar with both approaches and be able to switch seamlessly, for a team may employ several formations and shapes in the same game. In a zonal system, futsal teaches players to maintain distances between each other to protect spaces in front of goal and behind the defenders and in a man-to-man system to switch attackers and employ the fundamentals of pressure, cover and balance.
9. Futsal teaches players and teams the balance between risk and reward. Decisions to support an attack and at the same time be mindful of defensive responsibilities if possession is lost are amplified in futsal.
10. Futsal is universally identified as a fast paced game, but subtle changes in rhythm will occur depending on the level of organization of the opponent's defense. Futsal is a great training ground to teach players when and how to use quick ball circulation and when and how to slow the tempo.
11. Futsal teaches players and teams the importance of ball retention and possession to protect against the real threat of an opponent's counter attack.
12. In most formations, a coach will want to increase uncertainty for defenders by rotating attackers through a variety of movement patterns. Players starting in a deep position will move high and wide as they attempt to find space. As a result, a well-balanced Futsal player must be competent in defending and attacking.



## POPULAR FUTSAL FORMATIONS



### 1-2-2 FORMATION

#### Features of this formation:

- + The goalkeeper anchors the team and four outfield players form an attacking square.
- + There is equal balance in attack and defense – a simple system for young players.
- + Ideal formation when the keeper moves forward to become the Center in the opponent's half.
- + Provides excellent attacking width and support along the sides of the field.
- + To avoid static and predictable attacks, players must rotate off the ball.
- + Team can be exposed defensively to the counter attack if the deeper lying outfield players are too wide and are slow to recover centrally.
- + Attacking players must support the two defenders and goalkeeper



### 1-1-2-1 FORMATION

#### Features of this formation:

- + The attacking target player and defensive center provide the team with height and depth.
- + The flank players stretch the opponent's defense as wide as possible.
- + The attacking starting positions of the 1-1-2-1 formation are higher than a similar looking 1-3-1.
- + Players should be technically proficient and able to maintain possession.
- + Frequent turnovers in the early stages of possession will prevent the attacking shapes and movement to develop.
- + This formation is susceptible to a counter attack with only one defender committed full-time.
- + An organized defensive shape can resemble a 1-3-1 or 1-2-2.



### 1-3-1 FORMATION

#### Features of this formation:

- + A defensive set up with 3 defenders and 1 attacker.
- + Offers a team with good counter attack opportunities but requires mobile wide players.
- + Defensive center player controls the tempo.
- + Wide players seek to exploit space in deep positions.
- + The target player is the outlet for quick attacks and must be strong in possession with his/her back to goal.
- + Defensively the 3 defenders can play zonal or man-to-man. Man-to-man requires good communication and understanding between the 3 defenders.
- + The target player is less involved in defending and must occupy 1 defender high up the field.
- + The center player provides defensive security and with the keeper protects the center of the field.
- + Following a turnover the wide players must recover centrally and support the center player.



### 1-4-0 FORMATION

#### Features of this formation:

- + A center-less system built on the versatility of players to play attacking and defensive futsal with an aim of controlling possession against strong opponents.
- + No fixed positions – movements and rotations are constant and players must be able to play in attacking and defending roles.
- + A much more complex and sophisticated system to learn than 1-2-2, 1-3-1 etc.
- + Passing must be firm, aggressive and the pace of play at a high tempo.
- + Critically important is the player's cognitive appreciation of the system and movements of all players.
- + Less height and depth in attack leaves the team defensively less susceptible to counter attacks.
- + Often employed by higher level teams as it requires tremendous coordination by players and coaches.
- + No fixed target player leaves the defense to either sit back and watch the attackers pass at will or come out and leave the space behind.



# DYNAMIC WARM-UP IN A CIRCLE

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 1, 2 & 3: 3-11 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Dribbling, ball mastery and take-on moves. *Top 3 competencies:* Dribbling with the laces, moves to beat an opponent and scanning the field (vision).

## HOW TO PLAY

The players start by dribbling anywhere inside their circle performing fakes, faints and take-on moves.

The coach can raise one of the two colored cones. A yellow cone indicates the players should freeze/ stop their ball with the sole of the foot and jog or backpedal to the opposite circle. When the players arrive in the other circle they continue to dribble and perform fakes/faints/ and moves, always scanning the field to react immediately to the next coach's command. A white cone held above the coach's head indicates that players should dribble their ball to the other area.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Two groups of 6-8 players dribble in two circles on either side of the center court line.
2. The coach stands in the center circle holding 2 different colored cones or training vests - one in each hand.
3. The coach randomly raises one arm. The yellow cone indicates the players should 'freeze' the ball in their circle and then move by back-pedaling to the opposite circle.
4. On arrival at the opposite circle the players should start dribbling and performing moves at will
5. To progress the activity the coach raises a white cone.
6. Players now dribble their balls to the opposite circle.

## WHY USE IT?

A great warm-up activity requiring players to 'lift their heads' and scan the field while performing dribbling and take-on moves.

## SET UP

Set up 2 8-10 yards diameter circles with cones on each side of a futsal court. In each circle are 6-8

players each with a ball. The coach stands in a central where all the players can see him/her and holds 2 different color cones/vests.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Reduce the number of players in the circles and slow the tempo between raising the cones - allowing players to recover and get control of the ball before moving again.

**More Challenging:** Players can dribble with both feet and/or the sole of the feet. Increase the tempo by raising the cones more frequently to create controlled chaos and forcing players to lift their heads and react swiftly. Additionally, the coach might choose to hold 3 or 4 different disc colors, each one corresponding to a different task to be performed such as jumping jacks and push-ups.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Players should be creative as they dribble between areas and perform faints, fakes and take-on moves.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players to keep the ball close to their bodies while dribbling and faking. Demand that every time a player takes a step he/she must touch. This activity requires players to scan the field and the coach can move to different locations to add more challenge for the players.

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# 1V1 TO 4V4 + KEEPER SHOOTING A

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups and defending. *Top 3 Competencies:* Attacking 1v1, beating and escaping an opponent and support.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach serves one or more balls to players at one end. The coach calls the game type for Example "3 red against 1 yellow". The player or players in possession should beat the opposition and score. If the defender/s win possession, they should attempt to score at the other end. The players involved in a game return to the sideline when: a) A goal is scored; b) a ball goes out of bounds or c) a keeper makes a save. The coach serves balls, continually calling different plays such as "1v1", "2v1", "3v2," etc. As the players become more proficient add more simultaneous games.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The coach serves 3 balls to the first 3 players from the red team and calls "1v1."
2. Three players from the yellow team also sprint out to challenge the reds to create 3 simultaneous 1v1 duels.
3. The red attacking player should try to beat the yellow defender and score.
4. In the second diagram one of the yellow players has stolen the ball, attacked and scored.
5. All players leaving the field return around the periphery as soon as the game has finished.
6. In the final diagram the coach calls a 3v1, while other games are still progressing. Players must decide how to play without disturbing the other games.

## WHY USE IT?

Fantastic activity demanding high levels of concentration/focus while developing passing, receiving, shooting, mobility on and off ball as well as attacking and defending individually and in groups - to name a few technical components.

## SET UP

The area is 30 x 20 yards with 2 teams of 6 players, a keeper and 2 sets of goals. It is helpful to have 3 coaches for this activity particularly with young players. A coach should stand with each team and help to organize groups as commanded by the coach standing in the center. The size of playing area can be adjusted to suit abilities of the players.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Allow players to play 1v0, 2v0, 3v0, 4v0 from both sides of the field simultaneously. Encourage passing and movement to provide good angles of support.

**More Challenging:** As different plays are taking place add players to a play already in progress, i.e. Add another defender to a 3v1 to make a 3v2. Add and take players off plays - players must be very focused to succeed.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objective:** Focus should be on getting immediate control of the ball and identifying teammates and opposition.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage receivers to trap the ball using the sole of the foot. Defenders should not dive in. 1v1 players should open their arms for protection and balance.

## NOTES:

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# TIME & SPACE VERSUS THE KEEPER

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, & 4: 6-14 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing, movement off the ball and receiving. *Top 3 Competencies:* Passing over a short distance, receiving the ball with the sole and shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

The game is played in pairs with 4 to 6 players on each side of the court. One team starts and the 1st player runs towards the 2nd cone and "fake/bumps" the cone and turns to receive a pass along the ground from the partner. The receiver traps/stops the ball with the sole of his/her foot and proceeds to run towards the third cone. The passing player follows the pass and arrives at the stopped ball. The process continues until the players reach the final cone. The players then perform a quick interchange of passes and attempt to beat the keeper 2v1. The second group of players prepare to perform the same exercise on the other side of the field, but must wait until the other team has reached the fourth cone in the sequence. A slight break between the players allows the goalkeeper to reset and get ready to play against players from the opposite side of the court. As soon as the players have finished their 2v1 with the keeper, they must collect their ball and run around the outside of the court to the starting position.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The first player in the red line sprints to the 2nd cone, turns and faces his/her partner with the ball.
2. The partner passes firmly along the ground and to the feet of the receiver.
3. The receiver stops the ball with the sole of the foot and immediately moves to the next cone. The passer follows the pass and then repeats.
4. In the second diagram the red team are nearing the final cone (#7) and the first pair from the yellow team set off as the reds pass the 4th cone.
5. Alternate groups from the two lines each time a pair from the other team reach the 4th cone. Use 2 keepers if the pace is too quick for 1 keeper.
6. In the final diagram the first red team play 2v1 against the goalkeeper. 2 yellow and 1 red group follow close behind.

## WHY USE IT?

This is a dynamic passing and movement activity between two players that culminate in a 2 versus the goalkeeper. Players are encouraged to use the sole to stop the ball before moving on.

## SET UP

Play on a full futsal court, 7 cones are set up for each team in a zig-zag pattern on one half of the field to form 3x6 yards triangles.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Make the distance between the cones shorter and remove the keeper.

**More Challenging:** Add 4 defenders starting behind the goal. As the pair round the last cone, release the defender creating a 2v1+keeper.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** After the receiver has faked/bumped the cone he/she must trap the ball using the sole of the foot. Work with the players to get into a rhythm and good spacing between attempts.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players to pass with pace and accuracy. Make the fake/bump realistic - as if the cone was a real defender. Emphasize the importance of shooting far post and the partner should rush to the far post for a deflection or a rebound from the keeper.

## NOTES:

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# COUNTER ATTACK WITH OVERLAP

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and movement patterns. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing for possession and penetration, creating space and shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

The central player passes the ball to one of the flank players and makes a curved run to overlap. The receiver controls and pushes the ball diagonally with the sole of the foot and makes a pass to the opposite flank player who is moving towards the middle of the court. The passer always makes an overlap and the movement pattern is in a figure 8. As the players approach the goal, the coach will shout "shoot" and the player in possession will pass to the next player who should stop/freeze the ball with the sole of his foot. The passing player will run towards the ball and shoot the stationary ball at goal. As the player is shooting the coach will feed another ball onto the court to one of the other players. The two players will now attack the other goal at pace and the player who just shot attempts to recover as a defender.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 9-12 players are divided into 3 groups wearing colored vests. Cones are placed in the corners and centrally at one end.
2. The yellow and blue players start on the flank and the red team start with a ball centrally. A goalkeeper starts in both goals.
3. The red player starts with a pass to the feet of the blue player and the players weave up the field with pass, dribble and overlap runs.
4. This passing, overlap and dribbling sequence repeats until the players get close to the goal.
5. The coach shouts "shoot" when the players are in shooting range and the receiving player traps/freezes the ball for a running first time shot by the passing player.
6. Immediately the coach serves a ball to one of the other two players transitioning to attack the opposite goal. The player taking the first shot must sprint back to defend the breakaway.

## WHY USE IT?

In futsal, there is minimal time between one team's attack and the opponent's attack following a turnover. Players should attack knowing that a counter attack will happen fast!

## SET UP

Play on a full court. Three lines with 3 players stand at one end of the court approximately 6 yards apart. A cone placed on the end line helps players to know where to stand. Central players have the balls and the coach stands at the opposite end next to the goal with a good supply of balls. At each end a goalkeeper defends a goal.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Do not introduce the counter- attack option at first.

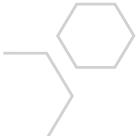
**More Challenging:** Play the counter attack of the counter attack until a goal is scored. Have another coach on the opposite side serving a ball once the 2nd shot is taken.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** A pass should be played with pace and to the feet of the receiving player. The receiver must control and push the ball forward with the sole of the foot. The flank players should be square to the ball thus making it easier to control the ball using the sole of the foot.

**Coaching Tips:** Make sure players are relaxed, with their heads up and aware of the opponents and space on the court. Make sure players take a first time shot.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# ATTACKING SEQUENCE - DRIBBLE, PASS & SHOOT

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Combination play, attacking individually and defending. *Top 3 competencies:* Dribbling, passing over short distances and shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

The movement sequence is initiated when a player in the central group weaves between the poles. The coach decides which group on the end line is involved first and then groups alternate. The first player in the line starts his/her move just before the dribbling player rounds the penultimate pole, performing a bump/fake around the pole in front of the group and then cutting towards the center. A pass is made to the feet of the target player who traps the ball with the sole of the foot. The dribbling player continues his/her run and receives a short return pass for a shot. The target player collects the ball and dribbles around the group to join the dribbling players at the half. The shooting player switches groups and becomes a target player.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 2 groups with 3-4 players start in the corner and the red team start in the center circle with the balls.
2. The red player weaves through the poles at game speed. As the red player passes the 2nd pole, a player from the blue team prepares to become a target player.
3. The first blue player sprints 3-4 yards, fakes a move to the outside and then cuts quickly towards the top of the penalty area.
4. The red player rounds the last pole, looks up and passes to the feet of the target who receives the ball with the sole of the foot and in a sideways position.
5. The red player sprints at full speed and receives a return pass to one side of the target and hits a first time shot. Speed of play is essential in all phases of the move.
6. The next group begins as soon as the shot is taken, or sooner if the coach wishes to increase the intensity.

## WHY USE IT?

This is a dynamic dribbling, passing and shooting activity with several key technical elements included. The coach can work with players on creating space, timing of movement and the release of a pass, receiving the ball with back to goal and quick combinations between the target player and wide player cutting in from the flank. Defensively, the coach can work on closing space and preventing the turn.

## SET UP

Play on half a futsal court with 3 groups of 3-4 players in each group and a goalkeeper. A group starts in either corner. A group starts with a good supply of balls in the center. The coach takes a position to best support and instruct players during the flow of the activity.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Remove the keeper.

**More Challenging:** Include a defender coming off the end line to apply pressure from behind the target player. Increase the frequency of activity by sending the next group as the dribbler reaches the 3rd pole.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Timing of the pass and movement of players is critically important in Futsal with very little space near goal. The target should bump and cut towards the top of the penalty area.

**Coaching Tips:** The target players should receive the ball with the sole of the foot in a sideways position and must keep his/her foot on top of the ball momentarily before releasing a pass. The skill to gain instant control of the ball, 'roll' a defender or release a pass with a deft touch is used frequently in futsal.

## NOTES:

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# NUMBERS-UP & DOWN 4V4

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

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

## HOW TO PLAY

The keeper starts a 4v4 game. As the first game progresses, the coach will select one of the defending players and serve him/her a ball to start a second game. At this point, the defender transitions to attack the opponent's goal - 1v1 with the keeper. This leaves the defending team with a player down 3v4 in the 'first' game. If 3 defensive players can win possession, they attack the other goal with the teammate that just played 1v1 with the keeper. Now the coach serves a new ball to a defending player to create second game and another 1v1 keeper. Essentially, the coach is looking to provide the attacking team with the advantage of an extra player (4v3). Restarts are from the keeper that conceded or was last attacked. The team kicking the ball out of bounds loses possession and the game is restarted.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Keeper passes the ball to the red attacker who gets wide and starts to dribble inside.
2. A yellow defender approaches the ball carrier and other yellow defenders in the vicinity start to close the space between them and the attacker they are marking.
3. In the second diagram the coach relieves some of the pressure on the red team by serving an extra ball onto the court to an awaiting yellow attacker.
4. Two games now begin with the red team playing 4v3 + Keeper and the yellow attacker playing 1v1 against the red's keeper.
5. In the final diagram there are now 3 games occurring. The yellow player finishes the 1v1 with a sublime chip over the keeper.
6. The coach simultaneously feeds in 2 more balls and the players must now decide which game to support.

## WHY USE IT?

Very fast, enjoyable and competitive activity. Players should focus on possession and identify when a numerical advantage is established to fully commit defenders to the attack and score goals.

## SET UP

The area is a futsal court. 2 teams of 4 outfield players and keepers. The coach is outside the playing area towards the middle with a supply of balls. The keepers also have balls available for restarts.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Coach can call 2 or 3 players off from the defending team to create 4v2.

**More Challenging:** Limit the number of touches to 2-3 when in a numerical advantage. Limit goal scoring attempts to 3-5 seconds.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Focus on keeping possession and waiting for the numerical advantage and opportunity to score.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players in a 1v1 against the keeper to commit the keeper quickly and recover to assist team-mates engaged in a 4v3. Coach should challenge attacking players in the 4v3 game to score a goal before the arrival of 4th defender. Help keepers recognize that they should also play as an outlet/field player and not only as shot blockers as the modern game requires.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# ATTACKING PATTERN PLAY - INTRODUCTORY 1-3-1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and movement patterns. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing for possession and penetration, creating space and shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

The attackers start with possession of the ball and are set up in a 3-1 formation - a Center player with players to the left and right and a target player. The 4 defenders are passive and man-marking to begin. The objective is for the attackers to rehearse an attacking pattern of play culminating in a pass to the target and a shot from one of the wide players. The Center and wide players exchange passes until an opportunity to play into the target player is available for the Center player. Once the pass is made the wide players should make runs towards the goal.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The red attacking players are in a 1-3-1 formation (red keeper not shown). The red team players exchange passes between the center player and the left and right wide players.
2. As the ball swings from side to side, the target player for reds maintains vertical height and moves to the side of the ball.
3. If the ball is passed to the left, the red attacker on the right moves towards the right corner, bumps/fakes and cuts back as the ball is passed to the center player. The objective is to create space and separation from the yellow defender.
4. After several exchanges of passes the center player sees an opportunity to pass to the target player as the yellow defenders over-commit to the left side of the attack.
5. The target player receives the pass in a side-ways position and controls the ball with the sole of his/her foot. The wide players make runs towards the goalpost.
6. The target player passes to the open player coming from the right, who hits a first time shot across the keeper aiming for the far post. The player from the left times his/her run perfectly to arrive as the ball deflects off the keeper for a tap-in.

## WHY USE IT?

Pattern play is a great way to teach players ball and off-ball movements used to great effect in a game. This type of activity helps to create a mental picture and assists players to recognize visual cues. Start without defenders and add defenders gradually.

## SET UP

The area is half a futsal court with 4 attackers, 4 defenders and a goalkeeper. One ball is needed and the coach stands in a position to observe and teach players during the movement sequence.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Remove the defenders and make the area smaller.

**More Challenging:** Instruct the defenders to apply half pressure for a few minutes and then transition to full pressure before moving to a full game. such as jumping jacks and push-ups.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Encourage flank players to gain some separation from the defenders by making short runs towards the corner, bumping/faking and then cutting back to the ball. The target must play 'high' to create space for the penetrating pass from the center player.

**Coaching Tips:** Gradually build-up the challenge to game like conditions. Start without defenders and work on passing and off the ball movements of the center and wide players. Then work with the target player. Build in one defender and then gradually add others. The objective of this activity is to wait until central marking player leaves the middle open so a pass can be made to the center.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# ATTACKING PATTERN PLAY - THE PARALLEL

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and movement patterns. Top 3 competencies: Passing for possession and penetration, creating space and shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

The attackers start with possession of the ball and are set up in a 3-1 formation (a center player with players to the left and right and a target player). The 4 defenders are passive and man-marking to begin. The center player starts and ends the move and players must recognize the visual cues as play develops. The center and wide players exchange passes. A flank player controls the ball with the sole of his foot and decides if he/she should engage the defender or pass the ball back to the central player. The opposite flank player makes a run trying to elude his/her marker for a possible back door pass. The target player moves deep and to the same side of the field as the ball. As the center player signals that the moment has arrived by shouting "now", he/she passes the ball wide, runs centrally, bumps the defender and sprints diagonally to the side line. As the pass from the flank player arrives at the feet of the center player, he/she "dummies" and the ball continues to the target. The Center spins, "losing" the marking defender and receives a first time pass from the target for a shot on goal.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The red attacking players are in a 1-3-1 formation (red keeper not shown). The 4 yellow defenders are passive and man-marking.
2. The center player passes to the right side and the target player moves to the same side of the ball. Following the pass, the center player shouts "NOW" and makes a run towards the goal.
3. The center player bumps/fakes and cuts to the right flank and shapes up to receive the return pass down the line. The wide player opens his/her body and makes a pass in the direction of the center player down the line.
4. The target player moves to the right flank towards the corner. There are now 3 red players on one side of the field. The yellow defenders shift to protect the center of the defense. The red attacker on the left fakes to move inside.

5. The red center player steps over the ball and lets it run to the target player. The center player spins' towards goal and receives a quick first-time pass from the target player.
6. The red attacker shoots and scores across the keeper into the far corner. The red attacker moves from the left flank to the center of the defense to provide balance in case of a counter attack.

## WHY USE IT?

This is a more advanced version of an attacking pattern play that can be rehearsed in practice. Ball and player movement must be synchronized and players must clearly appreciate their roles.

## SET UP

The area is half a futsal court with 4 attackers, 4 defenders and a goalkeeper. One ball is needed and the coach stands in a position to observe and teach players during the movement sequence.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Remove the defenders and make the area smaller.

**More Challenging:** Instruct the defenders to apply half pressure for a few minutes and then transition to full pressure before moving to a full game.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The attacking team should be patient passing the ball back and forth mostly between the center and the two flank players as they wait for the signal that the pattern play is on.

**Coaching Tips:** Flank players must attempt to lose the defenders with elusive runs, bumps and fakes. Creating separating is critical on a tight futsal court.

- NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# ATTACKING PATTERN PLAY - INTERMEDIATE 1-3-1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and movement patterns. Top 3 competencies: Passing for possession and penetration, creating space and shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective is for the attackers to rehearse an attacking pattern of play culminating in a penetrating run by the center player into a high and wide position. When the wide players receive the ball they should turn to engage the defender to disguise the final move – play becomes predictable if attackers don't seek to penetrate when they receive the pass. The wide player on the opposite flank should move up and down the wing looking to create an opportunity for a "back door pass." The target player must stay high and to the side of the ball. When the opportunity arises to make a move, the center player must signal. The central player runs centrally, cuts to the side line to receive a flicked or lofted pass from the wide player. On receipt of the return pass, the center player shoots across the keeper to the far corner of the goal and the target player arrives to finish rebounds.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 4 red attacking players set up in a 3-1 formation with 1 target player, 2 wide players and a center. The yellow defenders are passive to begin.
2. The coach should establish the passing and movement rhythm and move to game conditions quickly. After passing to the right the red center player runs centrally towards the goal.
3. The right flank player receives the ball and turns to face the defender. The yellow defender must be engaged (apply pressure to the attacking player).
4. As the defender approaches the center player has managed to move into a high and wide position. The yellow defender marking the center player is slow to recover. Wide player flicks the ball down the line.
5. On the other side of the field the left attacker has moved centrally to provide cover in the event of a counter attack. The target player moves away from the center player to provide room for a dribble or shot.

6. The center player elects to shoot across the keeper and the target player is well placed to finish the rebound.

## WHY USE IT?

This is a variation of the basic attacking 1-3-1 pattern with the ball transferred into a high and wide position for a shot/cross.

## SET UP

The area is half a futsal court with 4 attackers, 4 defenders and a goalkeeper. One ball is needed and the coach stands in a position to observe and teach players during the movement sequence. The attackers start with possession of the ball and are set up in a 1-3-1 formation (goalkeeper not shown): a center player with players to the left and right and a target player. The 4 defenders are passive and man-marking to begin.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Remove the defenders and make the area smaller.

**More Challenging:** Instruct the defenders to apply half pressure for a few minutes and then transition to full pressure before moving to a full game.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The attacking team should be patient, passing the ball back and forth mostly between the central player and the two flank players as they wait for a moment to make 'the' move.

**Coaching Tips:** Once players have grasped the basic movement patterns, add defenders and transition from passive to full pressure defending. It is not realistic to just pass back and forth without penetration.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_





# ATTACKING PATTERN PLAY - ADVANCED 1-3-1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and movement patterns. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing for possession and penetration, overlap and shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

The attackers start with possession of the ball and are set up in a 3-1 formation (a center player with players to the left and right and a target player). The 4 defenders are passive and man-marking to begin. The attackers exchange passes waiting for the right moment to perform a 3-1 attack on either flank. The target player always moves to the side of the ball and creates space to receive a pass close to goal. It is important for the target player to stay high to create space for a team mate. When an opportunity arrives a wide play will start to dribble towards the center player. The wide player passes to the center player and overlaps to the other flank. The ball is transferred into the corner and the player making the overlap ends the sequence with a shot or cross. Restart with the coach serving another ball. Teams will rotate attacking duties after 5 attempts.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The red attacking players are in a 1-3-1 formation (red keeper not shown). The 4 yellow defenders are passive and man-marking.
2. The center player passes to the right side and the target player moves to the side of the ball. The red player on the right receives the ball and dribbles towards the center player.
3. The player dribbling in from the right flank passes the ball to the center player and makes an overlapping run to the left flank.
4. The red player on the left recognizes the sequence and moves to a position near the left corner drawing the defender with him/her. The center player passes to the overlapping player as he/she gets close to the side line.
5. The overlapping player passes to the wide left player in the corner and then makes a run towards the ball. The receiver passes into the path of the on-rushing player for a first time shot.

6. The target player bumps/fakes and ‘peels-off’ to the far post in time to deflect shot into the goal.

## WHY USE IT?

Another variation of the 1-3-1 attacking pattern that can be rehearsed in practice. All the attacking players are constantly on the move seeking to draw defenders out of position and create space.

## SET UP

The area is half a futsal court with 4 attackers, 4 defenders and a goalkeeper. One ball is needed and the coach stands in a position to observe and teach players during the movement sequence.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Remove the defenders and make the area smaller.

**More Challenging:** Instruct the defenders to apply half pressure for a few minutes and then transition to full pressure before moving to a full game. Practice the same sequence on the opposite side.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Attacking players should be patient while exchanging passes waiting for the right moment. Do not rush and avoid making square passes.

**Coaching Tips:** As space is limited on a Futsal Court, creating time and space with movement off the ball and incisive passing is critical. Players should use the sole of the foot to gain instant control and the first touch should be with the purpose of setting up the next move.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# ATTACKING PATTERN PLAY - DIAGONAL 1-3-1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and movement patterns. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing for possession and penetration, creating space and shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective is for the attackers to rehearse an attacking pattern of play culminating a pass wide and a penetrating run to the opposite side of the field by the Center player. The wide player on the opposite flank to the ball should move into a defensive position to draw the opponent higher up the field. This movement sequence is critical to the success of the move. The window of opportunity for the pass will be tight, so the pass must be firm and played into the path of the attacking player running into space. The target player must stay high and to the side of the ball, creating space for the penetrating run and pass. The center player runs centrally, and then cuts to opposite side to his/her original pass. On receipt of the return pass, the center player shoots.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 4 red attacking players set up in a 3-1 formation with 1 target player, 2 wide players and a center. The yellow defenders are passive to begin.
2. The center player passes to the right flank and sprints into the center of the field before cutting away from the ball towards the left corner.
3. As the center player cuts, he/she should start to turn and run sideways to see the ball.
4. Complementary movements by the left flank and target players create space. A firm diagonal ball across the court reaches the center player in space.
5. The center player can shoot, dribble or pass, but the first touch must be towards goal if the attack is going to lead to a quick score.
6. The center player elects to cross to the far post where the target player has managed to create space for a goal scoring opportunity.

## WHY USE IT?

Building a repertoire of movement patterns is important for a competitive futsal team. Learning different visual

cues and knowing how best to respond as play develops will keep opponents unbalanced and attacking play less predictable. This is another variation of the basic attacking 1-3-1 pattern with a long diagonal pass made across the field.

## SET UP

The area is half a futsal court with 4 attackers, 4 defenders and a goalkeeper. One ball is needed and the coach stands in a position to observe and teach players during the movement sequence. The attackers start with possession of the ball and are set up in a 1-3-1 formation (goalkeeper not shown): a center player with players to the left and right and a target player. The 4 defenders are passive and man-marking to begin.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Remove the defenders and make the area smaller.

**More Challenging:** Defenders apply half pressure for a few minutes and then transition to full pressure.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Work with the flank player and target to time movements to create space for the center player.

**Coaching Tips:** Work on slight variations to the move in case one or more parts of the sequence don't work. For example, the center player can make a more shallow run to shorten the distance of the diagonal pass and reduce the time it takes for the ball to arrive at its destination.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# 3V3 + KEEPERS WORLD CUP

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18 year old players

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

## HOW TO PLAY

Two teams take to the field. The keeper starts the game and serves a player in space. 2 teams stand alongside the coach waiting to get into the game. The team conceding a goal must exit the field immediately and the coach invites another team to enter the playing area. The team that scored stays on the field and now attacks in the opposite direction. The game restarts with the keeper who conceded the goal serving to the team that stayed on the field. The game is non-stop and the winners continue playing as other teams rotate to enter the game. If the ball goes out of bounds restart the game with a kick in from the sideline or a goal clearance from the keeper.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The keeper for the white team serves a ball to start a 3v3 game.
2. The white team must keep possession and wait for the right time to attack the goal.
3. In the second diagram 2 defenders approach the same attacker and recognizing the overload, the ball is reversed back to the center.
4. The attacker dribbles at the defender and makes a pass wide to the open attacker. The ball is returned and a goal is scored.
5. The losing yellow team exit the field immediately after conceding.
6. The coach calls the blue team onto the field. The white team now attacks in the other direction.

## WHY USE IT?

Intense and fun activity used at the end of a training session. Futsal reinforces the speed of play and decision making elements, assisting players to develop technically very fast.

## SET UP

Play on a full Futsal Court. 4 teams of 3 players compete against each other. At each end there is a keeper. The coach is positioned centrally and has several balls available for restarts.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Instruct defenders to only attack when the ball crosses the halfway line and allow unlimited touches before making a pass.

**More Challenging:** Add new rules as the game progresses. a) A player must trap the ball using the sole of the foot, otherwise the next team replaces them; b) the team winning 2 games in a row, must only use their weakest foot to trap the ball, otherwise they leave the field; c) if a team takes too long to get onto the field, the team is replaced immediately; d) use the keeper as a field player all the time as the modern game requires.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The focus should be on patient possession build up. Teams waiting to enter the field must be ready. Attacking players should move on and off the ball always trying to lose a marker and getting to the back door.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players to trap the ball using the sole of their feet, gaining immediate control of the ball. Instruct defenders not to commit too early, resulting in a 2v1.

## NOTES:

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Attacking Transitions & Counter  
Attacks Theory // 41  
Types of Counter Attacks // 42-43  
Warm-up Activity // 44  
Training Sessions // 45-67

# ATTACKING, TRANSITIONS, & COUNTER ATTACKS DIPLOMA

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The following is an abstract from the Attacking Transitions and Counter Attacking Diploma theory session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. To earn the diploma, a participant was required to attend one theory and two practical sessions focusing on attacking transitions and counter attacking, plus attend 2 other elective sessions from the convention offering.



## ATTACKING TRANSITIONS & COUNTER ATTACKS THEORY

In the 'modern' game we often refer to key moments in the game such as defending, attacking, building up play etc. The presenters choose to focus on 'front foot' attacking soccer' and the moment in the game when a team transitions to the attack from defense. The presenters included how it imprint the coach's approach with players and methods introduced to raise team performance.

Attacking Transition is the moment in time just prior to a team or player regaining possession. The presenters refer to this as the 'no-mans-land' in the game. We must teach our players to identify these moments and draw on their knowledge and understanding as they apply different solutions as conditions dictate. At the moment of transition, it

is not only the player's eyes and ears, but also their 'knows', that will make the difference.

Different terms are used to distinguish between types of counter attacks, including Solo, Direct, Indirect and Pressing counter attacks. Working with the players to identify the characteristics of each transitional moment, helps to imprint and reinforce the learning experience. Key areas of focus include:

- Speed and accuracy of ball movement.
- Cognitive decision making.
- Movement without the ball.

In combination these performance characteristics can create forward momentum and lead to smooth, incisive attacking play.



### COACHING QUESTIONS

1. Are players in the correct positions and performing their assigned roles at the transitional moment?
2. Is there a belief and consistent mindset to support a chosen counter attacking strategy?
3. Where do individuals fit into the team's current style of play?
4. Are players functionally competent?
5. Are players prepared to immediately adjust if the team loses possession and is counter attacked?



### **SOLO COUNTER ATTACK**

The 'solo' counter attack is developed through freedom of a player's speed and creativity. Often it is illustrated by an individual's strength and guile to penetrate through the opposition's lines of defense. Teammates provide a vital contribution to creating the space with movement off the ball. This style of counter attack can also be initiated through a direct pass. Although the use of the word 'solo' suggests only an individual's contribution to the counter attack, the opportunity may be created by a teammate. As the 'solo' player engages the last defender or goalkeeper, a pass is often made to an open teammate to finish the attack with a shot.

### **DIRECT COUNTER ATTACK**

A 'direct' counter (also known commonly as the classic counter attack), relies heavily on the coordination of the team's effort. Creating a moment of transition, the counter attack opportunity is tactically developed. Typically the defense 'drops deep' to draw the opponent forward and when the ball is won, the first option is to play a direct pass to the target player (striker), usually by penetrating through the opponent's lines of defense. The penetration seeks to create a 'numbers up' situation and catch the defense in recovery. Understanding individual and team roles and responsibilities requires practice. Failure to execute effectively may lead to an abrupt end to the counter attack and pass the initiative and momentum to the opponent - the result is a counter to the counter! Fast movement of the ball allows effective onside runs, with and without the ball.



### INDIRECT COUNTER ATTACK

The 'indirect' counter attack (also known as a collective counter attack), is a rapid deployment of players forward and penetration between the opponent's defensive lines. This is achieved with players recognizing the visual cues and moving quickly to establish vertical height and horizontal width. A predictable rhythm is important to the success of this type of attack in comparison to the more dynamic nature of direct or solo counter attacks. The team moves as one which has an advantage of denying oppositional counter opportunities if possession is lost. The key feature of this counter attack is the exploitation of small pockets of space and exposing flaws in the opponent's team shape.

### PRESSING COUNTER ATTACK

The 'pressing' counter attack results from a team playing high pressure and typically exerting pressure on an opponent just before the player receives the ball. The outcome of such pressure is a defender making a mistake and losing possession. This approach may lead to a solo or direct counter attack. It is often initiated in the high-risk high-reward attacking third of the field. A trigger to alert the team that such an opportunity is possible is poor body shape of the receiving player, i.e. receiving the ball with his/her back facing their own goal and a delay in getting into a good position.



# TRANSITION WARM UP ACTIVITY

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Cognitive decision making, penetration with a pass or dribble, moving as a unit. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, speed dribbling, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts the activity with a pass to 3 attackers in one half versus two defenders. The attackers must attempt to keep possession and connect 4 passes to score a point/goal. If the defenders intercept the ball they must immediately seek to pass to the target player waiting in the other half of the area. This is the crucial transitional moment and the defenders now become the attackers and attacker transition to the defenders. The two attacking players that are closest to the target player transition to defending in the other half and one player stays as the new target player. If the ball leaves the area, the coach creates a transitional moment by passing to the target player in the other half and play resumes. Play for 2 minutes followed by an active rest for 45 seconds.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 3 white players possess the ball and attempt to make 4 passes against 2 blue defenders.
2. One blue target player is waiting in the other half for blue to win possession and transition into attack.
3. The blue defender wins the ball and immediately plays the ball into the target.
4. The blue players sprint in support of ball and attempt to maintain possession. The two closest white players transition defensively.
5. The blue team keeps possession and white team attempts to win the ball back.
6. The white defenders must now attempt to win the ball and transition to their target player.

## WHY USE IT

This is a possession warm up that focuses on the defending team winning the ball and quickly moving into the attack. Sets the proper mindset of penetrating deep into the attack.

## SET UP

The area is a 20x10 yards rectangle with cones used to separate the area into two. Play 3v3 with 3 attackers and two defenders starting in one half and one target player in the other. The coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Put pressure on the attacking player's technique by requiring the attacking team to play a minimum of two touch. This condition will exploit technical flaws and result in more transitional moments.

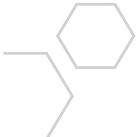
**More Challenging:** Equally, players with high levels of technical competence can make defending more challenging by playing 1 touch.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The coach is attempting to establish with the players a fast-paced transition mind set and ability to penetrate off the dribble or with a pass.

**Coaching Tips:** At the point of transition, help players to determine the best option to move the ball into the attack. Work with the players on their shape and support with teammates in transition.

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# TRANSITION 2V2 + NEUTRAL TO TARGETS

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: Transition mind set, penetrate quickly, move as a unit. Top 3 competencies: Passing over short/medium distances, speed dribbling, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts the game with a pass to either team and the attacking team attempts to score a point by playing a penetrating pass to a target player. The two attacking players can combine with the neutral player who plays for the team in possession to create a numerical advantage. If a point is scored the coach immediately plays ball to the team that just conceded the point. The coach should try and keep the tempo high and play fast. The players must decide when to go forward and when to maintain possession. The coach can add a progression to increase the challenge for the attackers. Following a successful pass to the target, the target must pass the ball back and the receiving player must dribble over the line in order to score. Play 4 intervals of 2 minutes interspersed with active rest for 45 seconds.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The white attackers have possession and use the neutral player to pass to the target.
2. The black team attempt to recover and prevent the whites from making the pass to the target for a point.
3. The coach creates the transition moment by passing the ball to the black team.
4. The white team are now immediately on defense and must recover to defend 2v3.
5. The coach adds a progression and requires the attackers to dribble over the end line.
6. The neutral player passes to the target who performs a neat combination to release the attacker.

## WHY USE IT

This activity reinforces the concepts of speed of play and speed of movement - a quick penetrating pass and run to support a teammate at the time of transition.

## SET UP

The area is a 30x20 yards rectangle. Play 2v2 in the area with a neutral/plus player supporting the team in possession of the ball at all times - creating a 3v2 attacking advantage. Two target players stand outside the area at each end and the coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** To slow down the ball movement and give defenders more time to apply pressure, require the attacking team to play a minimum of two touches.

**More Challenging:** Increase the speed of play and allow the attacking team to play 1 touch.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Develop a fast-paced transition mind set and seek to penetrate the opponents defense with a pass. Make good decisions when to penetrate and when to possess.

**Coaching Tips:** Focus on the best option to get the ball to the target. Work with players on movement, shape and support of teammates in transition.

## NOTES:

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# TRANSITION 3V3 TO GOAL

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: Quick transition, decision making -

dribble, pass, shoot and playing with numbers-up. Top 3 competencies: Passing over short/medium distances, speed dribbling, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts the game with a pass to either team. As soon as it is clear which team has possession of the ball, the defending team must drop one player back behind the flat marker. This condition allows the attacking team more time and space to penetrate and should create a 3v2 momentarily. The attacking team seeks to exploit their advantage and score or possess the ball if a quick transition is not available. The coach keeps the tempo high and plays a new ball in after a goal or if the ball goes out of bounds. Play several 2 minute intervals followed by 45 seconds of active rest.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 3 white attacking players have first possession and attempt to score.
2. Blues must drop a defender behind the flat marker to allow the attackers an advantage.
3. The extra space allows the white team to make a 'killer pass' between the defensive lines.
4. The white attacker makes a run behind the defender and shoots first time.
5. The blue defender is well placed and is able to control the ball and transition to attack.
6. Following a short dribble, the blue attacker plays a bent pass into the path of a teammate. Whites drop a player back to the marker.

## WHY USE IT

This is a terrific activity to help players play quickly in numbers up situations and score goals.

## SET UP

The area is a 30x20 yards rectangle with appropriate size goals at both ends. A flat marker is placed 7-10

yards from each goal to indicate a 'drop-back' point for defenders. Play 3v3 with 1 defender required to retreat behind the flat marker when the opponent has possession of the ball. The coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** To provide the attacking team with a greater advantage, add a neutral player to create 4v2 transition opportunity.

**More Challenging:** To increase the challenge for the attacking team, impose a 1-touch finish restriction when shooting.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Teach players to recognize visual cues and identify moments when to penetrate on the dribble, and when to play 'killer pass' to a teammate.

**Coaching Tips:** Provide visual cues for players to recognize when and how to exploit transition opportunity. Teach off ball movement of support players.

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# TRANSITION 4V4 FLYING CHANGES PART 1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Transition mind set, penetrate quickly

- dribble, pass, shot and exploit numbers up. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, speed dribbling, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

A normal game commences with throw-ins from the sideline. Transition of teams occur when the attacking team plays the ball over the opponent's end line - either a goal or missed shot. At that time 4 players on the defending team leave the field immediately and the 4 players off the field enter with a ball. The attacking players remain on the field and are now defending. The player with the ball can dribble, pass or shoot. Play in 6 minute intervals with 1 minute active rest.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 4v4 on the field with keepers and a second team of 4 waiting to enter the field.
2. Reds attack and the shot goes wide to trigger a transition for the yellow team.
3. The 4 yellow defenders run off immediately and are replaced by 4 players entering with a ball.
4. The red team transitions into defense and attempt to prevent the quick transition.
5. The yellow player dribbles down the center and picks out a wonderful pass behind the defense.
6. The yellow attacker sprints down the sideline and connects the lofted pass with a thundering volley. Defending reds off and new reds enter with a ball.

## WHY USE IT

This is a high intensity, end-to-end and exciting activity for players and coaches helping to reinforce quick transition in numbers-up situations.

## SET UP

The area is a 30x20 yards rectangle with appropriate size goals at both ends. Each team has 8 field players and a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper and 4 field players commence the game on the field for both teams and

4 players wait behind the end line ready to replace their teammates. One team starts with possession and the coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add an all-time offensive player to create an attacking overload - 5v4.

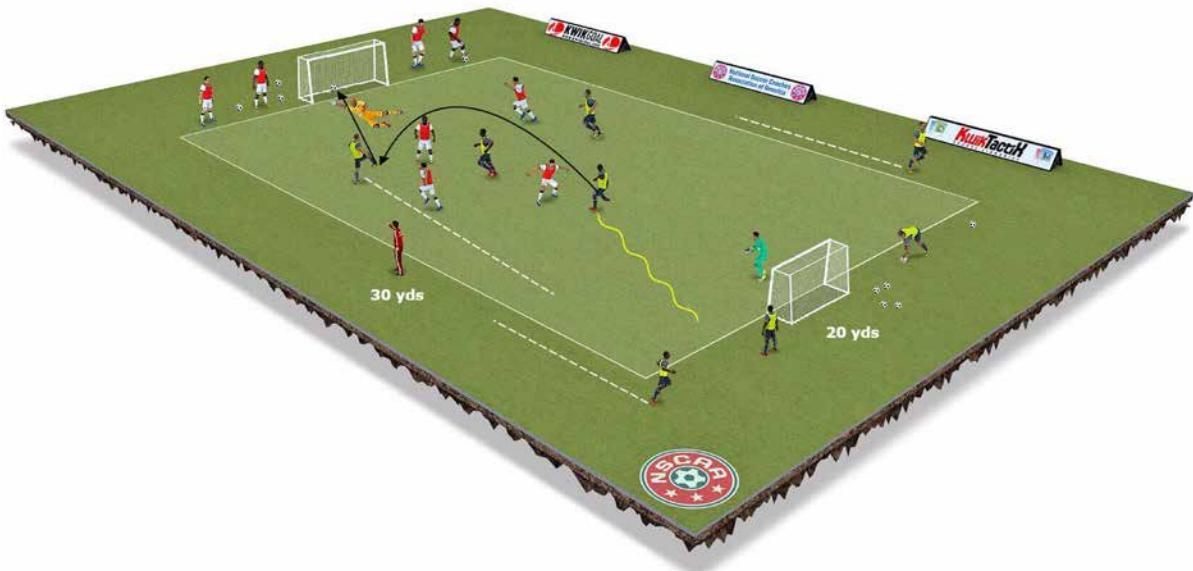
**More Challenging:** Add an extra defender and start all plays from the keeper's hands - this will slow the play and let the defenders get organized.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Work with the players to recognize moments to penetrate either off the dribble or with a probing pass. Determining whether the opponent's defense is organized or disorganized is important.

**Coaching Tips:** Identify visual cues for players to recognize when the moment is on to exploit transition. Teach off the ball movement of support players and encourage players bringing the ball onto the field to start wide - away from the congestion from the previous sequence.

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# TRANSITION 4V4 FLYING CHANGES PART 2

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Transition mind set, penetrate quickly

- dribble, pass, shot and exploit numbers up. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, speed dribbling, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

As before, a normal game commences with throw-ins from the sideline. Transition of teams occurs when the attacking team plays the ball over the opponent's end line - either a goal or missed shot. At that time the 4 players on the defending team leave the field immediately and the 4 players off the field enter with a ball. The most significant changes to this activity are the starting positions of the players off the field. As long as one player enters with a ball from the end line, the other three are allowed to enter from the side. The attacking players remain on the field and are now defending. The player with the ball can dribble, pass or shoot. Play in 6 minute intervals with 1 minute active rest.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 4v4 on the field with keepers and a second team of 4 players waiting to enter the field.
2. The red attacker shoots and the ball leaves the field over the end line. This is the transitional moment.
3. The yellow team enters as their teammates exit. Note that 3 players enter from the side and one player enters from the end line with a ball.
4. The red team must be aware of where the yellows are entering so they can recover and defend.
5. Good passing combinations and movement by yellows create a shooting opportunity.
6. The red defenders leave the center of the field open for yellows to exploit. No time to reflect as reds attack the other direction.

## WHY USE IT

This activity is a variation on the previous session with a few important adaptations, including the starting positions of players and increased demands on players decision making.

## SET UP

The area is a 30x20 yards rectangle with appropriate size goals at both ends. Each team has 8 field players and a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper and 4 field players commence the game on the field for both teams and 4 players wait around the edge of the field and behind the end line ready to replace their teammates. One team starts with possession and the coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add an all-time offensive player to create an attacking overload - 5v4.

**More Challenging:** Add an extra defender and start all plays from the keeper's hands - this will slow the play and let the defenders get organized.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Realistic to the game, players will not all attack from the same depth, so allowing players to enter from the side creates different attacking and defending options. For example, the attacking team may play long to a target player entering high up the field and the attacking team will be more aware of the need to transition to defense following an attack.

**Coaching Tips:** Don't let attackers enter the field in an off-side position. If an attacker is offside, start with a free-kick to the opponent. Ask attackers to consider how they will recover to defensive positions at the transitional moment.

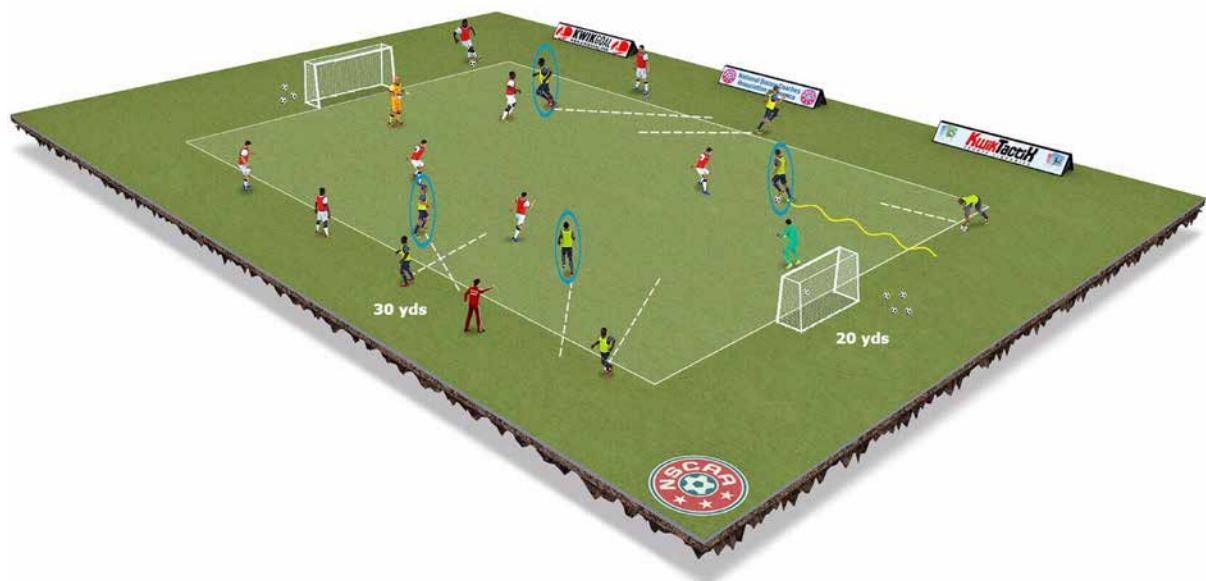
## NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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# TRANSITION 7V7 GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Transition mind set, penetrate quickly

- dribble, pass, shot and exploit numbers up. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, speed dribbling, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

Commence the game with typical rules and conditions for the age of the players. As the focus of the session is on transition, the coach should encourage players implement what they have learned in practice. Determining if the opponent is organized or disorganized when a turnover is created will help the attacking players to decide whether to play quickly and penetrate forward or to maintain possession. This is an ideal time for the coach to develop pattern-play, some choreographed moves that the team can implement in the game. For example, a pass to the striker (target) can help the team progress quickly forward and take advantage of the opponent recovering to defend.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 7v7 on an appropriately sized field.
2. The yellow team win a turnover and see an opportunity to play quickly in transition to the striker.
3. Recognizing the opportunity to quickly transition into attack, 3 midfield players are in support like a flash.
4. In a rehearsed pattern play, the striker 'drops' the ball back to a supporting midfielder, who passes a delightful ball behind the left fullback.
5. The overlapping yellow player floats a cross to the back post.
6. The left midfield player for yellow makes a long run to support and is rewarded with an opportunity to score.

## WHY USE IT

The final 7v7 game provides opportunities for the coach to implement transitional concepts with players in a game environment. The coach can introduce 'patterns' and freeze play to identify visual cues and adjust positioning.

## SET UP

The area is a 7v7 field (47x30 yards) with an appropriate size goal at both ends. Each team has 6 field players and a goalkeeper. Play a normal game and add conditions to draw out the theme as the game progresses. The coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Limit the number of restrictions.

Reduce the number of players and/or add an all time offensive player.

**More Challenging:** Add touch restrictions and more players - build to 9v9 and 11v11.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The game gives a coach an opportunity to evaluate how successful players can transfer the concepts learned in practice to the game environment. Work with the players to recognize moments to penetrate either on the dribble or with a probing pass. Determining whether the opponent's defense is organized or disorganized is important.

**Coaching Tips:** Let the game flow and minimize the number of stoppages. Identify visual cues for players to recognize the moment to exploit transition opportunity. Teach off the ball movement of support players and encourage players bringing the ball onto the field to start wide - away from the congestion from the previous sequence.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# TRANSITION 5V2 TRANSITIONAL WARM-UP

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Decision making immediately following a turnover, high tempo in attack, intensity to win the ball. *Top 3 competencies:* Immediate pressure on the ball, individual defending, passing and receiving.

## HOW TO PLAY

5 attacking players attempt to keep possession away from 2 defenders. The attackers are seeking to combine 5 passes for a point. If a defender wins the ball, he/she should attempt to dribble the ball out of the grid for a point. If the defenders win possession, the 5 attackers must give immediate chase and try to win the ball back before the defender dribbles out of the area. Play for 2-3 minute intervals and keep switching the defenders.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. A 5v2 possession activity. Attackers keep the ball away from the defenders to make 5 consecutive passes.
2. The size and shape of the area can also be adjusted to accommodate the player's skill level.
3. The red defender intercepts an errant pass and the yellow players converge to win the ball back.
4. The yellows cut off the passing lane so the red defender wriggles free and scores a point by dribbling over the end line.
5. On this occasion the yellow team is able to immediately win back possession from the defenders.
6. The yellow attacker must adjust in transition to make the area big and force the defenders to cover more space.

## WHY USE IT

This activity prepares the players for the theme of transition and counter attack - not just technically and tactically but more importantly, mentally. It forces the players to be closely tuned into the activity and its transitions.

## SET UP

The area is a 30x20 yards rectangle. The 5 attackers play against the 2 defenders. The coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Increasing the size of the area will enable the attacking team to have more time and space.

**More Challenging:** The coach can add a number of conditions, such as limiting the touches to apply pressure on the attacking teams technique, or add additional defenders. The coach can also reduce the size of the area to swing the advantage to the defending team.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Work with the players to develop an aggressive mentality to win the ball back following a turnover of possession. Also, encourage immediate transitions from attack to defense and defense to attack - this is not a rest period for either team.

**Coaching Tips:** To keep the activity high tempo, play for 45-60 seconds. The coach can also be responsible for serving a new ball if the ball leaves the area to maintain the intensity.

## NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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# TRANSITION FINISHING GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: Cognitive decision making, technical proficiency and speed and transition to defending. Top 3 competencies: Technical speed, immediate transition to defending and individual defending.

## HOW TO PLAY

The activity commences with passing combinations between players at the top of the penalty box. Each time a player passes they must follow the pass and join the next line - movement should be constant. After the third pass is made the receiving player takes a solid touch to set up a shot at goal. A transitional moment is created as soon as the shot is taken, with the shooter running to defend the flag goal. The player opposite the flags dribbles towards the flags and must attempt to beat the on-rushing defender. If the defender wins possession or the attacker scores, the game is over and both players leave the area. The defender prepares to dribble at the flag goals and the attacking player dribbles at pace to initiate the passing routine. There is no time for players to rest during the activity and mistakes will slow down the flow.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Cones and flags are used to set up shooting and 1v1 sequences.
2. The ball must keep moving as the players follow a pass and move routine. After the third pass an attacker shoots at goal.
3. The player shooting at goal immediately transitions to become a defender, playing 1v1.
4. The dribbler attempts to beat the shooter with a take-on move and shoot at the flag goals.
5. As soon as the shot is taken at the goalkeeper, the next sequence should start.
6. The player shooting in the flag goal must collect the ball and speed dribble to the cones to start the next sequence.

## WHY USE IT

This activity includes two sequences designed to establish the correct mentality with players to play on 'both sides' of the ball. It also emphasizes passing, shooting , dribbling and defending techniques.

## SET UP

The area is a 9v9 field (75x47 yards) with an appropriate size goal at one end. Cones are offset approximately 10 yards apart just outside the penalty box and two flags create a goal on one side of the field. 2 players start at each cone and 2 more players wait off the end line behind a cone. A goalkeeper defends the goal.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Limit the number of touches to 2 touches and shorten the distance between the cones to increase the speed of play.

**More Challenging:** Challenge the players technique with 1 touch restrictions and increase the challenge for the defender by creating a 2v1.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Emphasize the importance of technique when passing and receiving and players must maintain their attention/focus as they transition from shooting to defending the 1v1.

**Coaching Tips:** Ensure the players perform all components of the activity with pace and intensity.

## NOTES:

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# TRANSITION 5V3 TO 1V2 COUNTER TO GOAL

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** **Top 3 themes:** Attacking and defending decision making, high tempo in attack, intensity to win the ball. **Top 3 competencies:** Immediate pressure on the ball, individual defending, combination play.

## HOW TO PLAY

The Coach starts the activity with a pass to one of the 3 defenders who must attempt to make at least one pass before passing to the coach for a point. The 5 attackers must attempt to win possession and pass to the striker outside of the area. The striker attempts to 'hold' possession to give 3 of the attackers time to leave the box and support to create a 4v2. The attackers attempt to score. At first the pass from the box to the striker cannot be intercepted or challenged by the defenders.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The coach passes to the blue defenders who should attempt to combine and pass to the coach for a point.
2. The white team should collapse towards the ball and force a turnover.
3. The white team prevent the blue's passing to the coach and win the ball.
4. An early pass is played to the striker who must retain possession until support arrives.
5. The striker is able to link up with three attackers bursting out of the box.
6. A well worked combination with the striker releases an attacker wide. A great cross is matched by a far post header and a goal is scored.

## WHY USE IT

This activity begins to develop the process of transition from defense to attack with a counter using a 1-4-2-3-1 system. It is realistic to the game, for it recreates numbers, match ups and situations faced in the central areas of a field. It also employs the game to reinforce with players the cognitive challenges of playing with intensity and speed. The activity is also functionally relevant - roles on the field are specific to a system of play.

## SET UP

Played on a 9v9 field (75x47 yards) the coach sets up a 20x30 yards rectangle at halfway. Play 5v3 in the area in favor of the team attacking the goal. At the top of the box match-up 1 attacker against 2 defenders, supported by a goalkeeper.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Increasing the size of the area will enable the attacking team to have more time and space.

**More Challenging:** The coach can add a number of conditions, such as limiting the touches to apply pressure on the attacking teams technique, or add additional defenders. The coach can also reduce the size of the area to swing the advantage to the defending team.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Reinforce with the attackers the principles of play and pace of attack, get the ball to the striker quickly and support the lone striker.

**Coaching Tips:** To increase the likelihood of the attackers forcing a turnover, insist the defenders must take at least two touches.

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# TRANSITION FLANK COUNTER ATTACK

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: Tactical defending as a team, penetrate quickly - dribble, pass, shot and attacking movement. Top 3 competencies: Passing over short/medium distances, individual and team defending, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

The goalkeeper starts the game by distributing the ball to one of the defenders, who step into the last third of the field. The restraining line prevents the attackers from applying high pressure and allows the defenders to 'work' the ball out of the back. The attacking team attempt to draw the defenders forward and funnel the play in a predictable and planned direction. Once the ball gets to the 'trigger points' the counter attacking team applies full pressure attempting to win the ball as quickly as possible. The defending team's attacking objective is to combine and penetrate over the halfway line.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The blue team build up from the keeper and attempt to cross halfway.
2. The white team must drop back past the restraining line to give the blues chance to move forward.
3. The white team are funneling the blue team towards the sideline to set a trap.
4. The white team's striker cuts off the back pass and the other players prevent an easy pass forward.
5. The striker intercepts the ball and passes back to a midfield player in space.
6. The left midfield player achieves separation from the blue team's right defender and is found by a majestic pass. A quick counter is finished in style.

## WHY USE IT

This is a functional activity to help players develop a counter attack from a defensive position. A funneling technique is used to force the attack in one direction and make play predictable. It emphasizes the principle of compactness from front to back and side to side.

The solitary striker sets the first line of confrontation and makes the opponent's play predictable. The rest of the team follows this lead and applies the principles of defending to recover the ball and counter.

## SET UP

Played on half a 9v9 field (75x47 yards) set up a restraining line about 14 yards from goal. The team defending the goal are set up in a 1-3-2 formation and the attacking team in a 0-1-3-1. The coach directs from the sideline.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Walk through the patterns with the players unopposed to begin until the players understand the coach's expectations.

**More Challenging:** Add more players to the defensive team to make it more difficult for the attackers to 'trap' the defenders. Allow the defensive team to play direct, requiring the attackers to press high and in one coordinated movement.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The coach must work with the players to funnel the attack and set up a 1st line of confrontation. The objective is to make play predictable and create obvious trigger points the players recognize. At the appropriate moment the players should collectively apply intense pressure on the ball.

**Coaching Tips:** Ensure every play has the desired intensity and speed of play. It is important to work on both sides of the field and centrally. To maintain the intensity, work players in intervals, no more than 2 minutes at a time and then rest.

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# TRANSITION COUNTERING 7V6 TO GOAL

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Tactical defending as a team, penetrate quickly - dribble, pass, shot and attacking movement. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, individual and team defending, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

The goalkeeper starts the game by distributing the ball to one of the defenders, who step into the last third of the field. The restraining line prevents the attackers from applying high pressure and allows the defenders to 'work' the ball out of the back. The attacking team attempt to draw the defenders forward and funnel the play in a predictable and planned direction. Once the ball gets to the 'trigger points' the counter attacking team applies full pressure attempting to win the ball as quickly as possible. The defending team's attacking objective is to play to the target players who are restricted at first to the final third of the field.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The coach is working with the red team, who must allow the yellows to bring the ball forward.
2. The reds are seeking to draw the yellows out from deep lying positions.
3. A pass into the midfield is intercepted by the red team.
4. Before the yellows are able to recover the red team moves into an attacking space and presses forward.
5. The red team is able to exploit space behind the defense and a penetrating pass is made to the right midfield player.
6. The red midfield player takes the ball in stride, drives forward on the dribble and chips a ball in a perfect location for an on-rushing attacker to head home.

## WHY USE IT

This builds on the experience and knowledge from previous activities and further develops transition. This progression seeks to create space behind defenders by 'drawing' players out of deep lying positions. As previous, when the ball moves into a specific zone, the countering team immediately 'spring' a trap to turnover possession and start a counter attack.

## SET UP

Played on a 9v9 field (75x47 yards) use lines or cones to create 3 zones. The team defending the goal are set up in a 1-3-2-2 formation with the two players furthest forward acting as targets in the final third. The attacking team sets up in a 0-1-2-3-1. The coach directs from the sideline.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Increase the likelihood of a turnover and impose two-touch restrictions on the defenders.

**More Challenging:** Add more players to the defensive team to make it more difficult for the attackers to 'trap' the defenders.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The attacking team drops back into a low pressure defensive shape encouraging the opponent to come forward. This approach helps to create space between the defenders and the goalkeeper that can be exploited with a pass over the top. The coach must work with the players to funnel the attack and set up a 1st line of confrontation. The objective is to make play predictable and create obvious trigger points the players recognize. At the appropriate moment the players should collectively apply intense pressure on the ball, win and counter.

**Coaching Tips:** Increase the speed of counter attack by requiring the attacking team to shoot within four passes following a turnover of possession.

## NOTES:

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# TRANSITION & COUNTER FINAL GAME 8V8

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Counter attack, defending as an individual, units and team, and passing. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, penetration and support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

Normal rules and objectives apply to this game and the coach is able to observe from the sideline as both teams seek to work on transitional/counter attacking play. Without cones and lines on the field the team out of possession must organize the team's defensive shape to force play to be predictable. Hours of practice will assist the players to recognize the visual cues suggesting a counter attack is possible. If recognized, the team should employ one of the strategies devised by the players/coach to counter and take advantage of the opponent who is recovering into a defensive posture. The coach should let the game flow and minimize stoppages. If a teaching moment does occur the coach should freeze play, recreate, rehearse the correct sequence and then restart play.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The red team sets up in a 1-1-2-3-1 formation.
2. The yellow team sets up in a 1-3-3-1 formation.
3. The red team shows discipline and patience to funnel the opponents into 'recovery' areas of the field.
4. The striker cuts off the back pass and the other teammates apply pressure in an attempt to win possession.
5. The red team moves the ball quickly and switches play to the right side.
6. The right midfield player has time and space and drives a low cross for a charging striker to blast the ball past a diving keeper.

## WHY USE IT

This is the final activity in the series designed to teach players how to develop transition from a defensive stop to counter attack.

## SET UP

Play on a 9v9 field (75x47 yards) with appropriate size goals at both ends. Two teams each with a goalkeeper and 7 outfield players. One team is set up in a 1-3-3-1 formation and the team the coach is focusing on is set up in a 1-1-2-3-1. The coach directs from the sideline. Assistant referees monitor offsides.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Reduce the number of players on both teams.

**More Challenging:** Increase the number of players to 9v9 or 11v11.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The striker and midfield players should communicate to establish a restraining line and prepare for the counter attack. When a turnover is created, the team should look to penetrate through or behind the defense quickly if the defense is disorganized. If the opponent organizes quickly, possession is a better option, so the players should circulate the ball efficiently and with precision.

**Coaching Tips:** Alternate the start of the game between the defending and the counter attacking teams. Impose a condition requiring the defending team to score within 5 passes. Change tactics and have the losing team play a high press to get the equalizer.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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Speed of Play Theory // 28 - 29

Training Sessions // 69 - 91

# SPEED OF PLAY DIPLOMA

**CONTRIBUTIONS BY: CHRISTIAN LAVERS, PAUL MARCO, SAMANTHA SNOW, & NATHAN WILLIAMS**

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The following is an abstract from the Speed of Play Diploma classroom session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. To earn the diploma, a participant was required to attend one theory and two practical sessions on this topic, plus attend 2 other elective sessions from the convention offering.



# SPEED OF PLAY THEORY



## REDEFINING SPEED OF PLAY

This classroom session and two associated practical sessions attempt to redefine speed of play and show why efficiency should be our aim in developing effective players. While technical proficiency is fundamental to the concept of speed of play, too often, players are made to play fast with no consideration of the tactical moment. Technique and tactics are intertwined and we must teach players to understand and read game concepts while developing technical proficiency. Consider re-framing the idea of reading the game to one of developing agreements between players and ultimately to developing agreements about how we will play together as a team efficiently.

### FIELD SESSION #1

The first field session addresses working with young players and how to creatively introduce technical training. Too often technical training is done in isolation using 'closed-chain' activities with no context or relevance to the game for young players. While skill with the ball improves in this context, young players focus on the ball and develop habits of playing without seeing anything around them. When they move to the game, the environment is very different and players are not readily able to perform skills under pressure.

Young players in North America in comparison with children from other soccer playing nations, are less likely to be exposed to watching older players train and play. Often their only exposure to the game is at practice or weekend games – just a few personal exposures per week. Closed-chain activities (programmed patterns) do not have the same relevance for players like they do for children in countries where there is a stronger soccer culture. Our young players will not develop the imagination of the game if they do not watch older players train and play regularly. Therefore, we must create training environments relevant to the game and teach players to be aware of the space around them while they are devel-

oping their skills with the ball. We must build a bridge between the technical training work that we do and the game! Open-chain activities, where players must find their own path and move the ball relative to visual cues around them, are the only ways to achieve these goals.

The foundation of a player's technical competency is the ability to control the ball. Understanding space, pressure and movement should be acquired to enhance a player's tactical proficiency. Vision is a key technique and is a skill that needs to be taught. These things all need to be developed simultaneously to allow a player to fully develop in the game.

### FIELD SESSION #2

The second field session builds on the foundation established in session 1, addressing concepts critical for older players to develop an ability to play efficiently together. A solid foundational platform in game concepts is important for players to build group and team tactical agreements - the ability to play efficiently together with a strategy, style and system.

Players with the combination of technical proficiency and tactical understanding are most efficient and successful in their play – playing quickly when the situation demands it, or slowing a moment to allow development of space and/or movement. These players also are most intelligent in positioning off the ball – identifying when new or additional space is required and appreciating when movement should slow or stop.

### SUMMARY

In summary, sessions address misconceptions of the term 'speed of play' - often used inaccurately or in very ambiguous ways to support "faster" play, without considering the more specific tactical demands of the game and moment. A more nuanced understanding and more specific coaching/word choice will result in more proficient and sophisticated players and teams.



# DRIBBLING FOR PENETRATION

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 1, 2 & 3: 3-11+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Confidence, change direction/avoid pressure and find open space. *Top 3 competencies:* Ball mastery, vision and ability to change speed/direction with different surfaces.

## HOW TO PLAY

Use a race car analogy with young players – dribble around in the space without ‘crashing’ into any other race cars. If players crash they should ‘fix’ the race car by doing 8 taps on the ball and then dribbling. The players should be encouraged to find open space to ‘drive’ fast (green light dribbling). In traffic players should use quick feet but slower forward movement (yellow light dribbling). Foot on the ball (brakes) to avoid a crash and change directions quickly. To progress, the coaches try to tag racers. Racers who are tagged do 8 taps on the ball and continue. To evade the tag a player can put the brakes on and change direction before being tagged. In this eventuality the tagger should go and chase a different racer.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Each player starts with a ball and tries to show off their moves and skills. Players attempt to dribble their ball to each corner of the field without crashing.
2. Players who crash must stop to ‘fix’ their soccer ball by doing 8 toe taps before continuing. Goalkeepers should participate to work on their control of the ball.
3. The coach should demonstrate a specific move or skill, then allow everyone to practice the skill. Pretend you are going one way, but go the other way instead.
4. Two reds crash and are required to do four repetitions of the new turn while stationary and then continue. Make a point to watch each player and help where needed.
5. Once players have a basic comfort level with the skill, the coaches become taggers. Players may avoid being tagged by performing the move.
6. Coaches may pursue players at different angles based on the specific move or skill being introduced.

## WHY USE IT

This activity addresses dribbling, control of the ball and awareness of pressure, movement and space. These are the foundations that allow passing, support, movement off the ball and team shape to have relevance for the players. The foundation of the game is the ability to control the ball while also recognizing and manipulating pressure. Players must have confidence to control the ball away from pressure and develop team shapes that allow good team tactical decisions to be made. We must develop technique in conjunction with vision.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 4v4 field (30x20 yards) with players dribbling a ball within the boundaries of the area. The Coach and an assistant are positioned to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Be vocal and inform the players that you are coming after them – give them a chance to try the move you are working on.

**More Challenging:** Be sneaky with your pressure – catch players for not scanning the field and not escaping into an open space after making their move.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Make training fun! Develop vision in parallel with control of the ball.

**Coaching Tips:** Coaches can employ the ‘slanty-line’ concept by chasing each player according to their own level of ability with the ball. Young players should have regular success avoiding the taggers with some instances of getting tagged.

## NOTES:





# NUMBERS GAME TO END ZONES

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 1, 2 & 3: 3-11+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Take on moves, timing for change of pace and direction to unbalance a defender. *Top 3 competencies:* Vision and awareness, ability to change speed and direction.

## HOW TO PLAY

To begin, the Coach calls a number and plays a ball into the field. A player with the corresponding number enters from each team and plays 1v1. The remaining players move side to side along the end line to defend the zone. End zone defenders may not come forward off the end line. A player scores by dribbling under control into the end zone. The game continues until a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play and the coach will immediately play a new ball into the field and call new numbers(s). Points are also awarded for a good move that avoids a defender winning possession. For older players, issue each team 10 balls and pace them next to the end zone. The defender serves to the first opponent and follows to play 1v1. Keep score for 10 passes and then have the other team serve ten balls.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The Coach plays the ball to the red team and calls out a number. One player from the yellows comes out to defend.
2. The remaining players lock arms and guard the end zones, moving side to side. The Coach gives points for a move with the ball to try to unbalance or beat defenders.
3. The yellow player scores by dribbling under control into the red's end zone and past the end line 'guards'. For older players, one team starts with 10 balls. Players take turns serving a ball to the opponent and following to defend 1v1.
4. After 10 balls, the yellow team serves 10 balls and reds attack.
5. Coach works with individual players as they leave the field, or teaches the group during transitions. To progress, the player with the ball may play back to his/her line to bring on a second attacker.
6. If a second attacker is played into the game, a second defender also enters the game for the defending team.

## WHY USE IT

Playing to end zones provides players plenty of opportunity to be successful 1v1 against a defender. For the attacking player, movement in one direction creates space to play in the other direction. Bonus points encourage players to try moves against defenders at a level that is appropriate for each individual.

## SET UP

The area is 40x30 yards with 5 yards end zones. 4 players on two teams form a wall by interlocking arms. Players, numbered 1-4 standing in the wall are permitted to move laterally just in front of the end zone they are defending. The Coach is positioned to observe and instruct. The coach can have a supply of balls and/or balls can be positioned for each team adjacent to the end zone.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** The coach serves balls one at a time, allowing a player space/time to receive and attempt a move before being closed down by a defender.

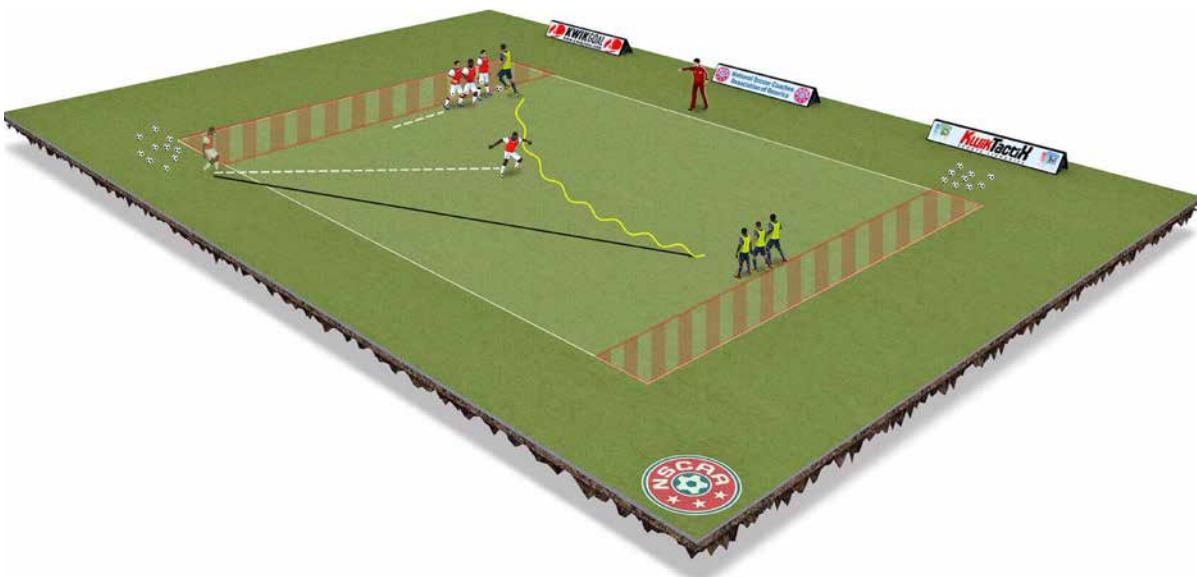
**More Challenging:** Add numbers to the game – play 2v2 or allow an attacker who has been closed down to play back and the receiving player joins to make a 2v2. Defenders who win the ball may counter attack.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Develop judgment of speed and angle of pressure. Develop understanding of how to use the ball to move defenders and create space.

**Coaching Tips:** Coach plays balls to one side or another to avoid putting players into immediate tackles.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# 4 GOAL GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Speed of play, movement into space

behind defenders and unbalancing the defense. *Top 3 competencies:* Receiving with surfaces of the foot, vision and ability to change speed and direction.

## HOW TO PLAY

Each team defends and attacks two goals. With mini-goals, play without goalkeepers. With modified full goals, play with one goalkeeper for each team who must defend both goals. Award bonus points if an attacker is able to beat a defender in the flow of the game. A regular goal wins 1 point, but a goal scored following a move to beat a defender counts as 2 points.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 4 v 4 to 4 small goals. Players earn extra points for moves to penetrate behind a defender.
2. Adjust the points value to encourage players to beat defenders. Play 2 minutes games and alternate with a team starting with a 2 goal lead.
3. The addition of an all-time offensive player gives an advantage to the red team.
4. The coach has added a 'no-go' zone in front of each goal to prevent defenders dropping deep.
5. Make the game more challenging by adding larger goals and a goalkeeper for each team.
6. Make games competitive with short bouts starting with one team leading. Winning incentive points becomes progressively more difficult.

## WHY USE IT

Multiple goal games permit attacking players to work on concepts of deception and change of direction to beat defenders. Multiple goals make defending more difficult and changes of direction more productive by opening space to score. Developing an understanding of how to use the ball to manipulate defenders provides the foundations to understand how to run off the ball and pass effectively.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 4v4 field (30x20 yards) with two portable goals, 2 yards inside each corner. As a progression, 5 yards wide end zones are added. Two teams of four and neutral attacking player(s) may be added to make the game more effective for the attacking team. The Coach is in a position to observe, restart the game and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add a neutral attacking player to the game. Create an end zone in front of the goals to prevent defenders guarding the small goals.

**More Challenging:** Only give bonus points for play that penetrates behind a defender(s). Play to two central goals and/or reduce the width of the field.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Make training fun! Develop vision, ability to read and manipulate movement of defenders and understanding of how to use change of direction and speed to get behind players.

**Coaching Tips:** Use the slanty-line concept by awarding bonus points according to the level of play of each player – beginning players get points for any attempt to unbalance a defender, while more advanced players must penetrate to get the bonus. Stress the technical points of using a move to unbalance a defender and build excitement.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# EFFICIENT PASSING & RECEIVING WARM-UP

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Hips facing field of play, movement off the ball, passing and receiving technique. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing and receiving for possession & penetration, creating space and decision making.

## HOW TO PLAY

This is a simple set up with the players passing in a sequence in clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. Instruct the players that they are to always keep the ball moving and at first there is no limit on the number of touches. Players must remain outside of the area although the ball can travel through the field. To progress the coach can apply restrictions on the number of touches - 3 touch, 2 touch, 1 touch.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Players start on the periphery of the area and pass the ball to the player to their right.
2. Players passing the ball are trying to play their teammates lead foot. The supporting player, 'drops deep' and opens the hips to receive the ball facing the field.
3. When the coach calls, "SWITCH", the players turn and play to the player on their left.
4. The movement pattern of the receiving player is away and then check towards the ball.
5. The first touch now takes the receiver towards the recipient of the next pass - a more dynamic first touch to attack space in front.
6. The receiver takes a second touch to control the ball and the third touch to pass.

## WHY USE IT

This is an activity used to develop receiving technique that will enable players to play quickly and with greater range. Preventing players from entering an area helps to maintain distance between teammates and places them in an ideal starting position with their hips 'open' to the field of play. Without pressure from defenders, the players can focus on their individual movement and technique without feeling rushed.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards rectangle with 4-6 players positioned outside the area. One ball is needed and the coach stands in a position to observe and teach players during the movement sequence.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Make the space bigger so players have more time to control the ball.

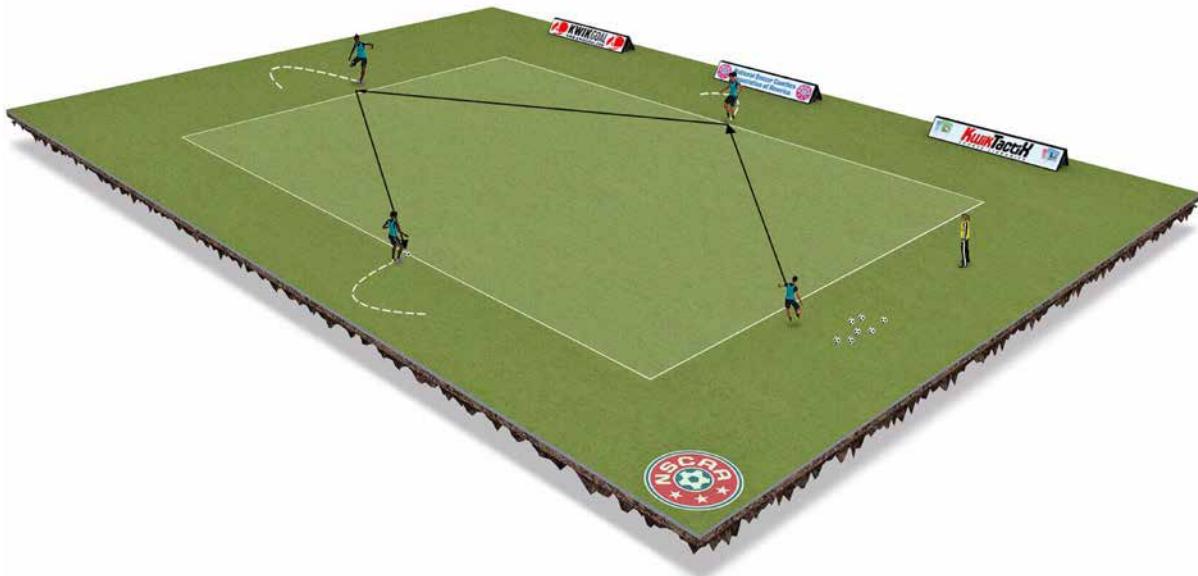
**More Challenging:** Add a second ball to make this activity more challenging - now the players must always be aware of where the soccer balls are and how/when they can support the ball.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The coach should work with players to ensure technical excellence - moving to support the ball, opening hips to the field of play, firm and accurate passing, looking over the shoulder before the ball arrives and improving a player's vision of the field.

**Coaching Tips:** Allow players to decide how many touches they take in the beginning. Challenge them to always keep the ball moving, whether the ball is at their feet or being passed. Encourage your players to communicate with each other. Since the players are always passing to their right or left, they are always going to be turning so the communication part straight forward - "TURN".

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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A small chemical structure diagram consisting of three hexagonal rings connected in a linear fashion.



# RONDO PLUS 1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Hips facing field of play, movement off the ball, passing and receiving technique. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing and receiving for possession & penetration, creating space and decision making.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective for the attacking team is to combine for 7 passes without the defenders touching the ball. The defenders attempt to win possession and pass to the coach. Peripheral players must remain on the outside and defenders inside the area. Defenders can only win the ball if they intercept a pass - there is no tackling allowed in the first variation of the game. The attacking team is awarded a point for every 7 consecutive passes and defenders win a point if they intercept and pass to the coach for a point. The attacking team receives a new ball from the coach to restart play. Include an additional attacker to the center of the field in the final progression to train center midfielder players.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. White attackers pass through the area to teammates on the periphery. Whites cannot enter the center of the field.
2. The blue defenders must remain inside the center of the field. The only way the defenders can win possession is by intercepting a pass to begin - no tackling.
3. Attacking players should keep their hips 'open' to the field so they can make a penetrating pass.
4. The attackers must continue supporting the ball deep to create penetrating passing lanes.
5. Another white player is added inside the area. On receipt of a pass the central player should turn and switch the field.
6. The central position is good practice for midfield players who must have the ability to possess and penetrate under pressure.

## WHY USE IT

This is a great progression from a non-contested technical warm-up. Pressure is added to test the attacking players technique with the addition of defenders, but

numbers still benefit the attackers, allowing some room for success. Players are constantly moving to support and the ball must keep moving. As soon as the play slows, the passing lanes close.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards rectangle with 5 attacking players positioned outside of the area and 2 defenders inside. One ball is needed and the coach stands in a position to observe and teach players during the movement sequence.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add more players to the outside, making the game 6 v 2.

**More Challenging:** Add another defender in the middle.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** To get the players moving to support the ball quicker, improve communication within the team, improve decision making on the ball and speed of thought.

**Coaching Tips:** If players are struggling to get a rhythm going, remind them that the ball must remain moving, either at their feet or pass. As soon as the ball stops the defenders are given an opportunity to reorganize.

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# FOUR CORNERS

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Communication with teammates, ball movement and supporting shape/angles *Top 3 competencies:* Passing for possession and penetration, vision and movement to support off the ball.

## HOW TO PLAY

Play 3-5 minute intervals. Teams earn points by connecting seven consecutive passes. Neutral players are always on the attacking team. Add conditions as the game progresses. For example, the ball must visit all 4 quadrants before the attacking team win a point, and/or all attacking players must touch the ball.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The white and black teams earn a point for 7 consecutive passes. Players can move freely around the area.
2. The white team uses the all-time offensive players wisely and draws the black defenders into one quadrant before passing to another.
3. To progress, the attacking team must make 7 passes and connect at least one pass in each of the four quadrants.
4. The black team force a turnover and start to pass before the white team reacts.
5. There are no all-time offensive players in this sequence - both teams have 6 players.

## WHY USE IT

Players work in teams of 5 with 2 all-time offensive players providing an attacking advantage. Dividing the field of play into four different quadrants, assists younger players with spacial awareness and provides a visual for short-range and long-range passing options. Good communication is needed between teammates as they work together to move the ball to each quadrant.

## SET UP

The set up is four 25x25 yards squares to form a larger 50x50 yards area. The four quadrants are marked with cones/lines. One ball is needed and the coach stands in

a position to observe and instruct. The coach also serves the ball from the sideline. Two teams of 5 players and 2 all time offensive players start in the area.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Reduce the number of passes needed to earn a point or expand the space.

**More Challenging:** Only play with one neutral player or increase the number of passes needed for a point. Introduce a condition that at least two passes must go through the neutral player.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The coach should focus on improving players' communication, movement and efficiency with the ball. Knowing when to play quick and when to slow down. Encouraging movement off the ball; peeling off defenders and opening hips to the field when receiving a pass. Encouraging players to find and execute longer range passes when available.

**Coaching Tips:** If teams are struggling to keep possession of the ball, look to fix the shape of the players in relationship to the area, opponents and each other. Neutral players should stay central - use center midfield/defenders for these roles and encourage teams to switch the field through the neutral players.

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# 6V6 PLUS KEEP BALL

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Decision making, support movement

and combination play. *Top 3 competencies:* Body shape, short one touch passing and different types of passes.

## HOW TO PLAY

One team inside the circle starts with possession and attempts combine passes utilizing the 3 players on the outside and 2 all-time offensive players. Once possession is lost the opponent attempts to keep possession. A point is awarded each time a team achieves 7 passes. Play for intervals of 3-5 minutes.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The 6 white players are in possession with the help of the 2 blue all-time offensive players.
2. The attacking team must combine to achieve 7 consecutive passes to earn a point.
3. The players in the center movement in support of the player on the ball is key.
4. Players on the outside must move slightly to open passing lanes and receive the ball. The black team wins possession and combines quickly before the whites can adjust.
5. To increase the challenge eliminating 1 or both all time offensive players.
6. The white team works well to find space and combine with internal and external support players.

## WHY USE IT

Coaches want their players to be able to play faster. These activities are designed to improve players efficiency with the ball and encourage quicker decisions by enhancing the players ability to read the game. The ability to execute more efficiently and effectively enables the players to play at higher tempo and performance level.

## SET UP

The area is a 9v9 field with a 60x47 yards area marked from penalty box to penalty box. A circle approximate 30 yards in diameter is marked with cones in the center of

the area. Two teams start with 3 players inside the circle, and 3 players around the periphery. 2 all-time offensive players support the team in possession inside the circle. The coaching position allows for general observation and is close enough to coach all the players. A supply of balls is conveniently located adjacent to the circle.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add an additional all time offensive player.

**More Challenging:** Include a condition restricting a pass back immediately to the passer and/or remove the all time offensive players.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The ball should continually be in motion to maintain possession. The attackers should use the numerical advantage and seek to split apart the 4 defenders.

**Coaching Tips:** Work with players to select the correct type of pass. Passing the ball with back spin slows the ball. Conversely, a ball passed firmly with no spin allows the receiver to play faster.

## NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

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# 6V6 PLUS TO LARGE GOALS

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Decision making, support movement and combination play. *Top 3 competencies:* Body shape, short one touch passing and different types of passes.

## HOW TO PLAY

One team inside the circle starts with possession and attempts combine passes utilizing the 3 players on the outside and 2 all-time offensive players. Once possession is lost the opponent attempts to keep possession. If the attacking team can combine with one of the two all-time offensive players, the game breaks out into the larger area. The attacking team attempts to score in the goal. If the defenders win possession, they also attempt to score at the other end of the field. Play for intervals of 3-5 minutes.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 3v3 in the circle with 2 all-time offensive players in blue. 3 players for each team on the periphery.
2. To break out of the circle, a team can combine 4 passes or find an all-time offensive player. In this sequence the all-time offensive player releases a white attacker for a shot on goal.
3. The white team seek to make 4 consecutive passes, but a black player is able to make an interception. If a team winning possession is able to pass to the side directly they can counter.
4. A rapid counter attack by black exploits a slow recovery from the white team and the black team penetrates. A great cross from the left is matched by a towering header by a teammate.
5. Blacks attack again. This time, however, the white defenders do react quickly and are able to get some defenders goal side.
6. On this occasion a run from a deeper position behind the defense is made by a black midfield player. A magnificent chipped pass is finished superbly on the volley.

## WHY USE IT

This activity further progresses the theme of speed/efficiency of play by adding large goals and goalkeepers.

The training activity is close to resembling the set-up and conditions of the 'real' game.

## SET UP

The area is a 9v9 field with an appropriate size goal at both ends. A circle approximately 30 yards in diameter is marked with cones in the center of the area. Two teams start with 3 players inside the circle, and 3 players around the periphery. 2 all-time offensive players support the team in possession inside the circle. The coach stands on the sideline in a position to observe and instruct and has a supply of balls.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add an additional all time offensive player.

**More Challenging:** Include a condition restricting a pass back immediately to the passer and/or remove the all time offensive players.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The attacking team should seek to move the ball, move off the ball and retain possession with a view to manipulating the opponent's defense. With the two all-time offensive players, the attacking team should also look to exploit this numerical superiority, play quickly and directly as the game dictates.

**Coaching Tips:** Movement off the ball can be as critically important as movement with the ball to create space. Encourage players to make overlapping runs, runs in front and runs behind the defenders.

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# 5V2 KEEP AWAY

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing combinations, creative movement off the ball and defending 1v1. *Top 3 competencies:* Support runs - overlap etc., passing over short/medium distances and communication.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach passes a ball to the attacking team with 5 players. The objective is to combine for a set number of passes to earn a point. The number of passes can be adjusted to the competency levels of the players. In this example the attackers must combine for 5 passes. The defenders attempt to intercept or challenge the attackers to win the ball. If the defenders can pass to the coach the defenders win a point. Play 3 minute intervals and then switch defenders.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 5 reds must make 5 consecutive passes to win a point against the 2 yellow defenders.
2. In this illustration the attackers are able to retain possession, but play is quite predictable. The ball is being passed around the edge and the attackers are essentially staying in the same positions.
3. In the second sequence the movement is much more creative and defending becomes much more challenging.
4. A give and go combination with an overlapping run is complemented by a teammate vacating space for the receiver to run into.
5. The red team are caught playing in a tight area with very little space to work the ball.
6. The yellow defenders intercept the pass and play to a target player in the end zone. Can the reds do a better job to win the ball back as soon as a turnover occurs?

## WHY USE IT

Often the key to playing with speed is a function of player movement to support and to create space for others. This activity teaches players to move intelligently as the ball transfers from one location to another. It stresses the players off-ball runs as the ball is in flight and the decisions made by the receiving player as the ball arrives.

## SET UP

The area is a 40x25 yards rectangle. In the second sequence 5 yards long end zones are added to both ends to extend the length to 50 yards. The coach serves the balls and stands in a position to observe and instruct. 5 attackers and 2 defenders to start.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Reducing the number of defenders always helps an attack and so does making the area larger.

**More Challenging:** Add a progression with two target players for the defending team standing in an end zone at each end. Can the attackers win the ball back immediately once they have lost possession and take advantage of a disorganized defense?

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** This type of set up can be used for a simple possession activity. However, the emphasis is on speed of play and as such, we want to see constant player movement to support and create space for teammates. Short double passes will draw defenders to the attackers to create opportunities for a wall pass. Give and go combinations, over-lapping and under-lapping runs, take-overs, penetrating dribble, movement away and checking into space are all skills that should be taught.

**Coaching Tips:** Stop the play and step onto the field to identify possible patterns. Help players visually recognize different scenarios and ask them to solve the challenge. Celebrate when players implement a pattern you have previously worked on - this type of reinforcement will help to solidify with players how you wish your team to play.

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# 5V3 WITH ROTATING TARGETS

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing combinations, creative movement off the ball and defending 1v1. *Top 3 competencies:* Support runs - overlap etc., passing over short/medium distances and communication.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach serves the ball to either team to start. The team in possession must seek to transfer the ball from one target player to another to score a point. When in possession, the attacking team has a 5v3 advantage. Once the ball is passed to a target player, the game reverses. The target players represent a striker and a central defender. Once the activity reverses direction, the central defender becomes a deep lying support player and the players in the area can pass back to maintain possession. The defenders attempt to intercept or challenge the attackers to win the ball. Once the defenders win possession, they must pass to either target player - this pass does not score a point. Play 3 minute intervals and then switch players.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 3v3 in the middle and both teams have a target player standing on opposite sides of the square.
2. The yellow team gets the game underway and combine to score 1 point with a pass to a target. Play must now go in the opposite direction with yellows still with possession.
3. In the second illustration the yellows combine again. The coach allows the players to exchange position when the ball is played to a target.
4. The yellow attackers switch positions. On receipt of the pass, the target player dribbles onto the field into space. A passing combination sets up a perfect opportunity for an overlap.
5. Reds intercept a pass and are immediately on the attack. Yellows must move swiftly to defense.
6. The red target player enters with the ball and yellows move to collapse space around the dribbler.

## WHY USE IT

Continuing with a theme of player mobility in establishing opportunities to play with speed, this activity creates

a constantly changing environment requiring player adaptability. The directional nature provides game-realistic transitional moments and challenging players to decide whether to play with a fast or slower tempo.

## SET UP

The set up is a 30x30 yards square with 3v3 in the area and 2 support/target players for each team standing opposite each other. The coach serves the balls and stands in a position to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** A 'Zombie' condition for a defender to create a 3v2 advantage in the center.

**More Challenging:** Allow players on the inside to exchange positions with the target striker when a successful combination is made. Interchanging positions should add another layer of complexity. Coaches can also add touch restrictions.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Recognizing space and opportunities to penetrate are critically important for speed of play. With young players in particular, the tendency is to move to create space for oneself - even if that movement closes space for others. Thus, help players to appreciate the importance of creating space for teammates and using movement to unbalance the defenders.

**Coaching Tips:** With numbers even in the middle, turnovers will be frequent, particularly for less competent players. One tip is to make a defender passive/Zombie when a turnover occurs, essentially creating a 3v2 in the middle.

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# 3V2 + KEEPER TO GOAL

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing combinations, creative movement off the ball and defending 1v1. *Top 3 competencies:* Support runs - overlap etc., passing over short/medium distances and communication.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach nominates 1 goalkeeper to start. The opposing team send a defender to wait in the middle zone. The keeper rolls a ball wide. The first player in both lines enter the field and the player receiving the ball dribbles. The attacking team has a 3v2 plus keeper advantage and the defender starting in the end zone is prevented from leaving. The 3 attackers must use movement patterns and creativity to play efficiently - changing the tempo of the attack to find a good scoring opportunity. If the defenders win possession, they attempt to score in the opponents goal. As soon as the play is dead, the striker and defender leave the field and the defensive midfield player drops to defend in the zone. The attacker that dribbled the ball after receiving the keepers pass is now the striker and the other support attacker drops to defend in midfield. At first, the coach should allow players to set-up, but as they become proficient, permit the opponent to start when they are ready. Now the attack works in the other direction and rotations of players continue.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The yellow team has possession and the keeper rolls the ball wide. 2 yellow players enter the midfield zone with the ball.
2. A yellow attacker waits in the attacking zone and is defended by a red central defender. A red midfield player approaches the yellow's ball handler. A yellow defender and red attacker wait up the other end.
3. The yellow player penetrates centrally and the other yellow midfield player makes an overlapping run. This run 'freezes' the red midfield player temporarily and space is created for a pass.
4. The reds are now stretched and the yellow attacker has time to play a beautiful chip to the far post for the striker to thump a header into the net.
5. The attack now goes in the opposite direction. The

red's keeper rolls wide. At the same time a yellow attacking player drops to defend in midfield and players rotate ready for the next sequence.

6. The red's striker comes to meet the pass outside the end zone and the defender cannot follow. A blind-side run is created and finished at the far post.

## WHY USE IT

The final sequence introduces speed of play themes to a game like activity. Goalkeepers are added and numbers of players on both are almost balanced. Movement is still the main focus, with players now tested in the build up to creating shooting opportunities.

## SET UP

The field is 60x30 yards with three 20 yards zones marked with cones/lines. In each zone there is 1 defender and 1 striker. Place cones on both sides of the field in line with the top of the end zones. 2-3 players from each team stand by these cones at the defensive end waiting to come on as attackers. A goalkeeper with soccer balls defends an appropriate size goal at both ends. The coach stands in a position to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Restrict defenders to zones and remove 1 defender.

**More Challenging:** Add more players to the field and include an offside line.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The opportunity to work with functional (role specific) objectives is possible. Positions such as central midfield, striker, wingers are all evident.

**Coaching Tips:** Show the striker how movement along the line creates challenges for the defender.





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Diploma Overview // 94

The Development Cycle // 95

Warm-up Activity // 96 - 97

Training Activities // 98 - 119



# ADVANCED YOUTH COACH DIPLOMA

**CONTRIBUTIONS BY: IAN BARKER, JIM FLEETING, DONALD GILLIES, MAREN MCCRARY, & DONALD PARK**

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The following is an abstract from the Advanced Youth Coaching Diploma classroom session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. To earn the diploma, a participant was required to attend one theory and two practical sessions on this topic, plus attend 2 other elective sessions from the convention offering.



# ADVANCED YOUTH COACHING DIPLOMA



## SESSION FEATURES

1. Introduction to the 'development cycle'.
2. Appreciation of the basic principles of elite player development.
3. Translate and correlate the principles of player development with the development cycle.
4. Identify where, when and how to solve problems that a team experiences on the pitch at youth level.

## OVERVIEW

Developing a sound understanding of what constitutes the building blocks of a team is important for the coach to establish with youth players. It provides a framework for coaches to address challenges that surface in the game and the development cycle provides foundations for a coach to plan for the development of elite players.

## INTRODUCTION

Periodization and seasonal planning are important to a coach's ability to impact the development of youth players. A Coach's success in planning a cyclical programme and managing variables such as - when, how much and how intense - is critical to enhancing player's understanding of the theory and execution of themes such as support, penetration and width.

The theory session assumes, to a certain degree, that the basics of a player's education has been addressed during the formative stages of development. However, we will address what measures can be implemented during the season when it is clear members of the team are not keeping pace in order to effectively continue their education at a more advanced stage. For example, if a coach wishes to focus a session on '3rd player runs' - deep movement mainly performed

by overlapping midfielders - the technical execution and appreciation of when and how to support must be advanced enough or the objectives will fail.

## THE DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

The term 'Development Cycle' is used in many industries from scholastic education, medicine and IT however it is a term the Scottish FA use on the UEFA Advanced Elite Youth Licence to identify a coach's reaction in solving their players educational challenges on a regular basis. Periodization is a vital part of the development process and a solution when it is clear a problem exists requiring a reaction by the coach. The Scottish FA believe that the Development Cycle in conjunction with a seasonal plan are solutions to achieving coaching success.

## KEY INFLUENCERS

In attending to issues and problems that arise in the game there are key influencers that must be in place:

- Philosophy of development.
- Culture and environment.
- Training methodology.
- High level of coach quality and education.

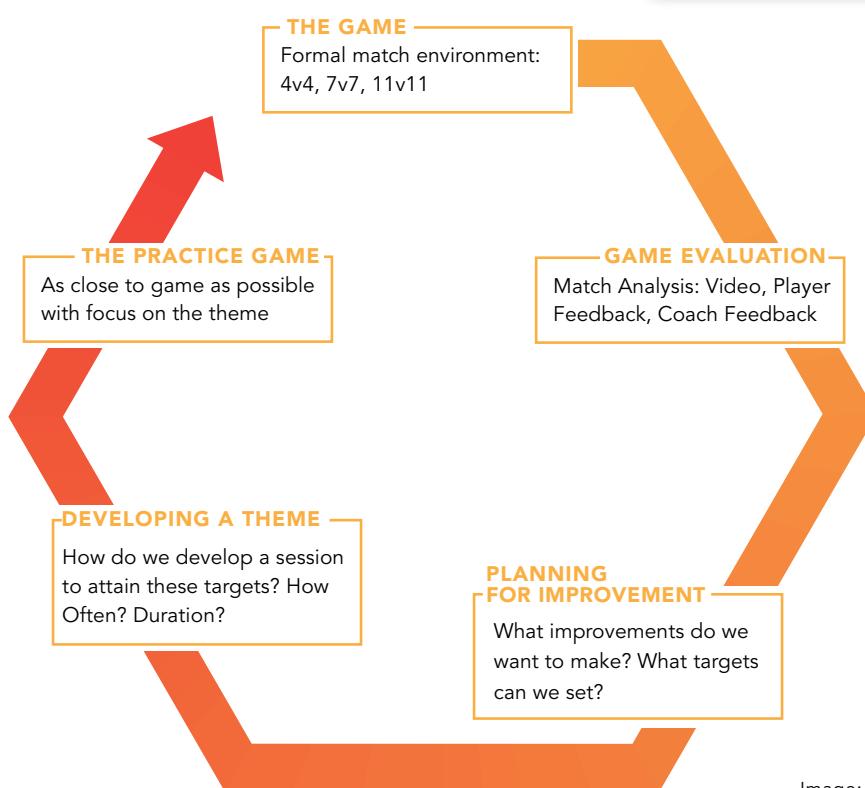


Image: Development Cycle Diagram



## COACHING QUESTIONS

Understanding how these influencers impact elite player development is absolutely vital for the coach. Such knowledge enables the coach to identify problems and issues experienced in a game and translate them into the 'Development Cycle'. Once these basic principles are in place the potential benefits and impact of the tool can be realized. For example, the coach may identify support play during the game was inadequate and wishes to address these frailties at the next training session:

1. How effective will the session be with players unable to cope with a change to routine?
2. Will players learn if they have negative thoughts and concerns pertaining to issues from the previous game?
3. How effective will the session be if coaches have not planned to create the most relevant and engaging session?

Addressing these potential issues in the preparation for elite player development is a basic requirement for coaches before the development cycle can be used to full effect.



# HEAD & HANDBALL WARM-UP

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Support, physical preparation and movement off the ball. *Top 3 competencies:* Throwing and catching, effective movement and support play.

## HOW TO PLAY

The basic rules of the play are established with the players. The ball must be passed from teammate to teammate with a throw catch sequence. On receipt of the throw, the catching player is not allowed to run with the ball in his/her hands, and must come to a stop before throwing to teammate. The objective for both teams is to advance down the field until a player is in range to head the ball at the goal. A goal can only be scored with the head.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 2 teams play 7v7 with keepers on a 4v4 size field in complementary formations.
2. Blue attackers move to receive the ball in advanced positions and provide support to secure possession of the ball.
3. The game progressed with 2 players from each team becoming targets - who are unchallenged. The game moves quicker between ends and more space is now available.
4. The blues combine well with a series of throw-catch and eventually score with a nice serve from the target player.
5. Add gates to the field. Team in possession must go through the gates before scoring.
6. The white team uses a wide gate to stretch the blue defense and a diving header finishes a slick move.

## WHY USE IT

This activity is designed to get the players physically prepared and is a fun warm-up incorporating basic of support concepts players will need to understand and replicate in activities that follow.

## SET UP

A 4v4 field is used to keep the area compact and space between players small (30x20 yards). Two appropriate size goals are at both ends. Two teams each with 6 outfield players and a goalkeeper. The coach stands in a position to observe and instruct the players during the activity. A supply of balls are next to the goals to enable the keepers to restart.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Allow players to take 3-4 steps before throwing

**More Challenging:** Add a time limitation to speed up decision making - the ball must be released in 2-3 seconds or the opponent is awarded possession.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Players should recognize that in order to advance up the field the team must move together and support one another on and off the ball.

**Coaching Tips:** Quick, penetrating runs to receive the ball are key. Deciding the correct point to attempt a header should also be discussed. To maintain the intensity, work players in intervals, no more than 2 minutes at a time and then rest.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# TECHNICAL PASSING & SUPPORT 1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing combinations, support movement and receiving technique. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, receiving and off the ball movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

There are three sequences. In the first sequence, the activity commences with a pass made from one corner to a center player who creates separation from a manikin. At the same time, a second group starts from the other corner. On receipt of the pass, the first center player turns and passes to the second center player. The first center player makes an overlapping run around the manikin to receive a return pass and in turn, passes to a corner player. To complete the sequence, the corner player passes along the side of the grid to a player waiting to commence the same routine on the other side of the area. Each player moves up one station.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 2 groups commence the activity simultaneously. The sequence involves 4 players.
2. A white player starts with a pass to the 1st center player who receives and passes to a 2nd center player. The 1st center player makes an overlapping run and combines with a pass to the other corner player.
3. In the second sequence the 1st center player for white makes a double-pass with the corner player, who passes to a 2nd center player checking away from the manikin.
4. The first center player makes an under-lapping run to receive the return pass. The timing of the pass in front or the other corner player is exact and the receiver takes the ball in stride and dribbles to the opposite corner.
5. In the final sequence, the 2nd center player runs in front of the manikin. The players combine to release the 2nd center player for a shot at a goal 10 yards from the end line.
6. The coach should be working with the players to ensure appropriate angles are created and runs and passing combinations are well timed.

## WHY USE IT

This activity provides a controlled environment for players to work on passing, receiving and support movements that will be utilized in phase of play activities and games later in the session.

## SET UP

The area is a 20x20 yards square with a 10x10 yards square in the center marked with manikins. One player stands by each manikin and 2-3 players in the corners of the larger square. The ball supply are with the players starting the passing sequences. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Simplify by starting with one set of manikins.

**More Challenging:** Sequences two and three progress the challenge and include a different passing combination between the two middle players followed by a pass to a player on the move and/or a shot.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Work with the players to demonstrate good passing and receiving technique and an improved understanding of how to move effectively into space to support the player on the ball. The movements should be fluid.

**Coaching Tips:** The players should be encouraged to check over their shoulder before receiving the ball and have a clear picture of their next objectives/movements.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# TECHNICAL PASSING & SUPPORT 2

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: Support, transition, and possession. Top

3 competencies: Passing over short and medium distances, defending pressure/cover and movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

In the first sequence one team of five stand around the edge of one square. Inside the box are two other teams of five. The coach determines which team in the area is the attacking team and the defending team. The activity commences with the team on the edge of the area and the attacking team playing against the defenders - 10v5. The object of the game is for the attacking teams to retain possession and make 5 consecutive passes to score a point. If the defenders win possession, the two teams inside the area switch roles.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 2 teams play 7v7 with keepers on a 4v4 size field with complementary formations.
2. Blue attackers move to receive the ball in advanced positions and provide support to secured possession of the ball.
3. The game progressed with 2 players from each team becoming targets - who are unchallenged. The game moves quicker between ends and more space is now available.
4. The blues combine well with a series of throw-catch and eventually score with a nice serve from the target player.
5. Add gates to the field. Team in possession must go through the gates before scoring.
6. The white team uses a wide gate to stretch the blue defense and a diving header finishes a slick move.

## WHY USE IT

Creating transitional moments in practice develops 'unstructured moments' requiring the team winning possession to move the ball away from a congested area. The team can then develop organized possession.

## SET UP

The area is 40x20 yards rectangle divided into 2x20x20 yards squares. Three teams of five players commence the activity in one half. The coach stands in a position to observe and instruct the players during the activity. The coach has the ball supply.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add more players to the outside to increase the advantage to the attackers.

**More Challenging:** Open the second square and move two of the peripheral players to the opposite end. When the defenders win possession they attempt to pass to the other end of the area and the game shifts to that square. Another option is to allow all players to enter the area and leave a target player in each square as an outlet to relieve pressure and transition. Increase the number of passes required to win a point.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Focus on the teams efforts to retain possession and create balance when the defenders transition to attackers. At the transitional moment, the defenders should look to quickly transfer the ball away from pressure and into space.

**Coaching Tips:** Players should be alert - ready and aware of options when we win the ball. Move the ball quickly and support in the areas away from pressure.

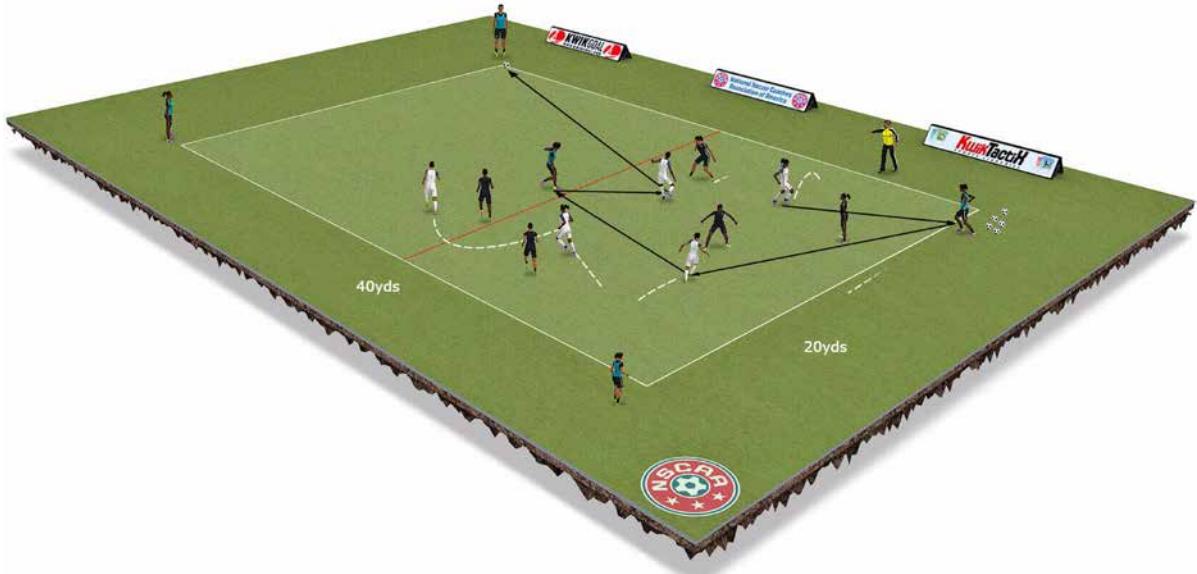
## NOTES:

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# DEVELOPING SUPPORT 2 ZONE GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing combinations, support movement and shooting. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, creative movement and finishing.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective for the attacking team is to work the ball to the striker and provide support to establish an overload (2v1) before attempting to score. As the activity progresses more attackers and defenders are added to the field. When the defenders win possession they are encouraged to score in the counter attacking goals.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The red attackers play 4v2 against the white defenders in the defensive zone.
2. The reds are able to manipulate the white defenders to create space for a penetrating pass to one of the red strikers in the attacking zone - attackers have a 2v1 advantage.
3. In the second sequence a defender is added to the attacking zone creating a 2v1 in favor of the defense and 2 red players drop to start in the defending zone.
4. As the ball is played forward to the striker, two reds burst out of the defensive zone and support the striker.
5. In the final sequence, an extra attacker and defender are added to the attacking zone to create a 3v2 in favor of the defenders.
6. The reds are able to work the ball forward with a lofted pass and the strikers combine. A red attacker supports from the defensive zone and makes a run from deep to receive a penetrating pass.

## WHY USE IT

This activity progresses key technical and basic tactical themes focusing on providing support to players on the ball. Game specific scenarios are developed as more players are added and the activity moves to a game field.

## SET UP

The activity occurs on a 7v7 field with the restraining line 14 yards from the end line creating a build-out zone for the attacking team. An appropriate size goal is at one end and two counter attacking goals are placed at an angle in the build-out zone. The game commences with a 4v2 in the defensive zone and 2v1 in the center zone both favoring the attacking team. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add additional attackers and allow 2 players to move between zones to support the striker.

**More Challenging:** Add additional defenders as practice progresses.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Teach players different solutions to progress possession forward and learn how to penetrate opponent's lines of defense with movement - with and without the ball.

**Coaching Tips:** Work with the striker to create space and once the ball arrives to hold possession and allow teammates to get forward in support. Support doesn't always need to come from the passer. Others not involved must be wary that they may be key players as the play unfolds.

## NOTES:

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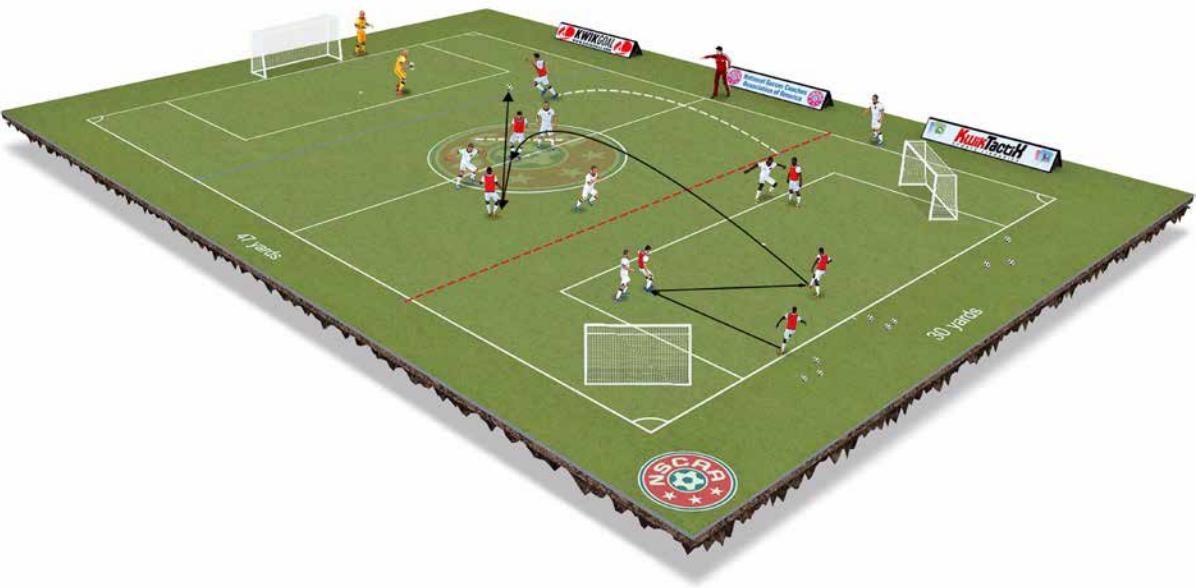
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# DEVELOPING SUPPORT 3 ZONE GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Support, penetration, and progressive possession. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short and medium distances, defending pressure/cover and movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

The game commences with a ball served to the attacking team by the goalkeeper. The fullbacks must get wide and make the numerical advantage count as the team builds play from the defending zone. The attacking objective is to move the ball through the zones and score, either by passing or penetrating on the dribble. To begin with only 1 player from each zone may support the teammates in the next zone. If the defenders win possession they attempt to score.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The field has 3 zones. Reds are in a 1-3-2-1 formation and Whites in a 1-2-2-2 formation.
2. The coach works with the red team to build play through the zones. The red fullbacks must get wide to stretch the field and provide good passing angles for the midfield players.
3. The red team manage to work the ball to the striker via a central midfield player. The other midfield player runs in support of the striker.
4. The red team must adjust defensively to cover for the midfield support run in case the ball is lost.
5. In the final sequence, the ball is played long by-passing the midfield.
6. The two midfield players recognize this strategy and are quick to support the striker.

## WHY USE IT

The final activity before progressing to a game draws on the realism of a game-like environment and promotes the theme of support from previous activities. This integration step is vital, allowing players an opportunity to identify visual cues, reinforce/practice support movements with smaller numbers and under advantageous controlled conditions.

## SET UP

The activity occurs on a 7v7 field with three zones. The defending zone from the restraining line to the end line, middle zone from the restraining line to halfway and the attacking zone. An appropriate size goal at both ends. The coach works with the attacking team with 7 players and sets up in a 1-3-2-1 formation. The defending team also with 7 players sets up in a 1-2-2-2 formation. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add more attacking players and allow players to move freely between zones.

**More Challenging:** Play even numbers in each zone and add movement restrictions between zones.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Players will begin to recognize visual cues that initiate movement in support of team mates. This 'trigger' prompts a player to make a pass or a run to a predetermined location. Eventually all the players on the team will move and react in unison.

**Coaching Tips:** Help players to make good decisions - such as when to pass or dribble into the next area. The reaction of the defenders should indicate to the attackers if an opportunity to penetrate is more favorable than to possess.

## NOTES:

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# 7V7 GAME WITH EMPHASIS ON SUPPORT

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 4 & 5: 12-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing combinations, support movement and shooting. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, creative movement and finishing.

## HOW TO PLAY

Offside is dependent upon size of area and at the coaches discretion. Potentially create an offside line at the edge of the penalty box. The game commences with a ball served to the attacking team by the goalkeeper. The attacking objective is to move the ball forward through the 'lines' of team, encouraging players to support teammates.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The white team start with the ball and are set up in a 1-2-3-1 formation. The red team defends in a 1-3-2-1 formation.
2. The white midfield players drop deep to provide support for the defenders and these movements draw the red midfield players forward. The white's fullback sees an opportunity to play direct to the striker.
3. The white midfield player runs 'across the face' of the red player and into space wide.
4. As the ball is passed into the striker from the fullback the central midfield play provides a deep option and the other midfield player times the run wide perfectly.
5. Again the ball is worked out of the back by the white team.
6. The left midfield player for whites is able to penetrate between the red's central defender and fullback. A wonderful pass through the seam is finished in fine style.

## WHY USE IT

Once players have a reasonable understanding to the support objectives the game is the best tool for learning. Its unpredictable nature allows the coach to work with his/her players in situations that will be 100% realistic to the actual game. Coaching within this environment should be the most beneficial part of the session.

## SET UP

The activity occurs on a 7v7 field with an appropriate size goal at both ends. The coach works with the attacking team with 7 players and sets up in a 1-2-3-1 formation. The defending team also with 7 players sets up in a 1-3-2-1 formation. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Increase the number of attacking players.

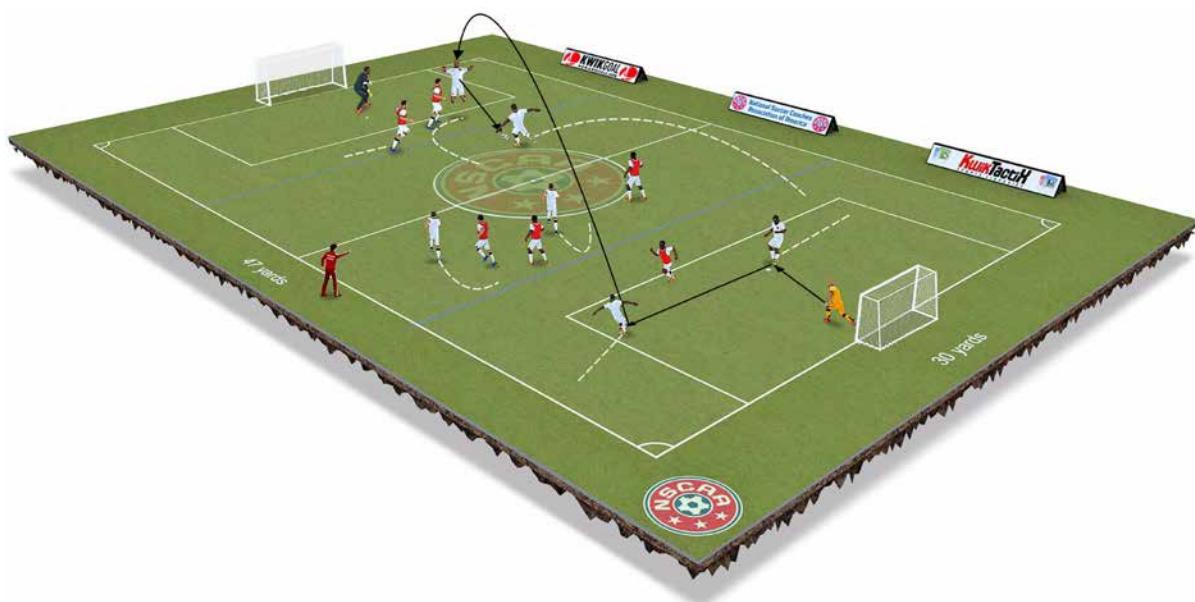
**More Challenging:** Set-up both teams in similar formations.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Work with the players to recreate as many support opportunities and patterns developed on the practice field.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players to make good decisions, particularly when faced with an organized defense - do not force the ball forward when possession maybe a better option. Look to create angles and increase the speed of play when a switch in play is on.

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# LINK UP PLAY WARM-UP

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: Dribbling, passing and communication.

**Top 3 competencies:** Passing over short/medium distances, dribbling with the laces, and movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

The first players in activities 1 and 3 commence the activity. Activity 1: dribble at pace to join the line waiting for activity 2. Activity 2: player dribbles a few yards towards the ladder and then makes a weighted pass outside the ladder and the passer keeps moving, placing one foot between each rung of the ladder before collecting the ball at the end and passing to the next player waiting for activity 3. Activity 3: On receipt of the pass, the first player in line for activity 3, passes firmly to the first player waiting for activity 4. Activity 4: The player dribbles through 3 sets of gates before joining the line for activity 1.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Four activity stations are created in a 30x20 yards area. There should be one person working on each station.
2. Activity 1 - the red player dribbles at pace from one cone to the other and then waits for activity 2.
3. Activity 2 - player dribbles to the ladder, passes the ball down the side and then performs an exercise along the ladder.
4. Activity 3 - the white player passes firmly along the ground to the feet of the blue player waiting for activity 4.
5. Activity 4 - the blue player moves smoothly, dribbling the ball in and out of 3 gates.
6. Add different variations to each activity to increase the challenge and intensity.

## WHY USE IT

This is a general warm-up activity involving 4 passing, movement and dribbling sequences.

## SET UP

4 stations are established in a 30x20 yards area. Activity 1: 2 cones 15 yards apart; Activity 2: two cones 15 yards apart and a ladder stretched out in between the cones; Activity 3: two cones 15 yards apart and Activity 4: 3 cone gates 5 yards apart and offset in a zig zag pattern. Balls start with the players in activity 1 and activity 3. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Remove the ladder and reduce the number of gates to permit a straight dribble

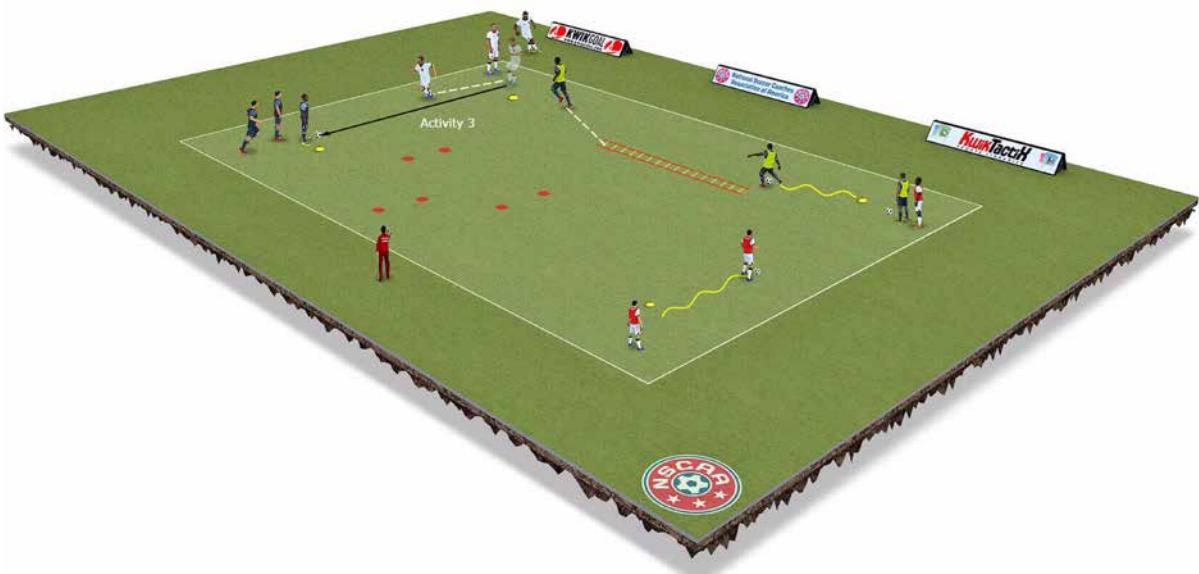
**More Challenging:** Limit the number of touches permitted when dribbling through the gates.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Warm the players up and reinforce the importance of caring for the ball when passing and dribbling

**Coaching Tips:** Focus on close control of the ball using appropriately weighted touches. A simple activity but numerous opportunities will be presented to teach technique. Communication with next player sequence is essential.

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# LINK UP PLAY- SPEED & CREATIVE MOVEMENT

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3 & 4: 6-14 year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Dribbling, movement skills and changing direction. *Top 3 competencies:* Sprinting, cutting/evasive movements, and dribbling with the laces.

## HOW TO PLAY

On the command of 'GO', a player from each team sprints into the area. In the first sequence one team has to go through 3 gates before a player on the other team catches them. If the catcher manages to touch the opponent, roles are immediately reversed - play until one player is able to run through 3 gates. Send multiple groups but be careful of players running into each other. A progression is to create a 'golden gate' in the center of the area - if a player is able to run through the golden gate, the point is awarded to that player. In the final progression play with soccer balls.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The white player has to get through 3 gates before the red player is able to catch him/her.
2. If the red player is able to touch the white player, the red player immediately attempts to go through 3 gates with the white player in pursuit.
3. A golden gate is added (red cones).
4. The white player makes a sharp cut and the red player overruns. The white player is able to stroll through the golden gate.
5. The coach adds a ball.
6. Which player will be first to go through 3 gates?

## WHY USE IT

This is a dribbling and movement activity encouraging players to change direction and speed to elude an opponent.

## SET UP

The area is 30x20 yards with 6 gates marked with cones equally distributed on each side of the area. Two teams with 6-8 players line up behind a pole/cone facing the area.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Start with both players attempting to get through 3 gates first - no catcher.

**More Challenging:** Add a ball. Call out 'GOLDEN GATE' and increase the number of gates the player must dribble through.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Players react quickly to commands and move creatively and quickly to achieve their goal.

**Coaching Tips:** Send multiple groups to avoid lines of players watching and to add additional challenge.

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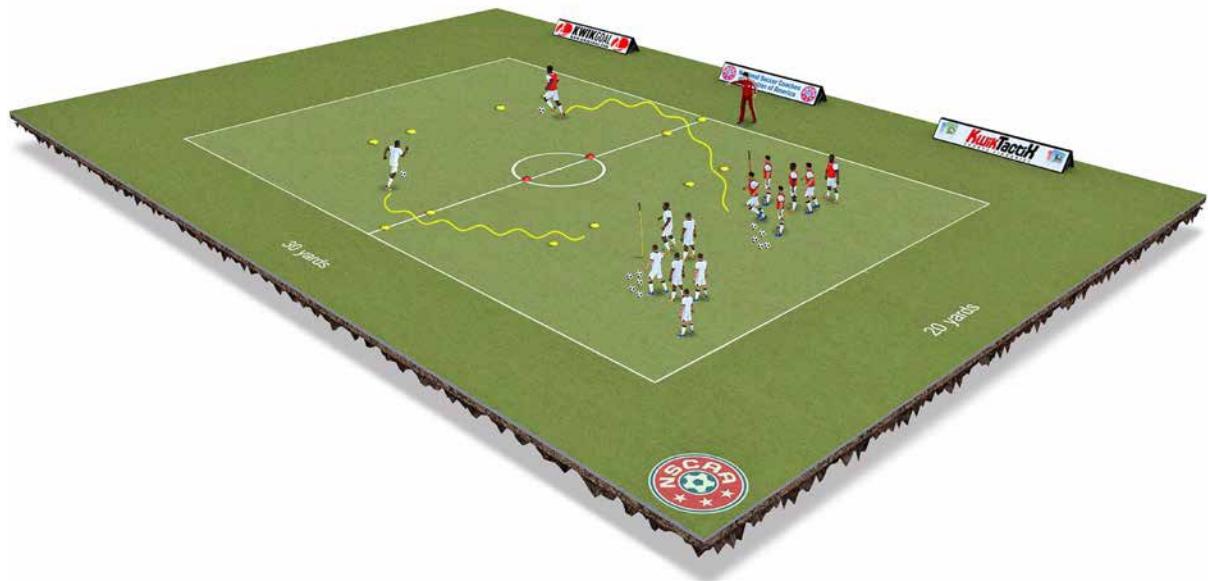
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# LINK UP PLAY- 3 PLAYER WEAVE

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Dribbling, passing and creative movement. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short and medium distances, dribbling with the laces and movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

Play starts simultaneously at each end of the area with players diagonally opposite initiating the play. In the first sequence the ball is passed from player 1 to 2 and 2 to 3, each time the ball moves forward. The players remain in 'lanes' moving vertically up the field until they reach the other end. As there is a group coming the other way. Players must be careful to avoid the oncoming group.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Two groups start this activity simultaneously from both ends of the field.
2. Each pass moves the team forward and support players should time their run to receive the ball in stride, avoiding receiving the ball in a stationary position.
3. In the second sequence, manikins offer a greater challenge. The 1st yellow player combines with the central player behind the manikin and makes a pass across field to player 3.
4. Player 3 combines with player 2 who has made a run around the central manikin. Player 3 will them play across the field to player 1.
5. In the final sequence, players 1 & 2 on the yellow team play a 'double-pass' combination and switch the ball to player 3. Player 2 moves into the channel vacated by player 1 and sprints forward.
6. On receipt of the ball, player 3 dribbles inside leaving space wide. This is a good indication that an overlapping run is possible and player 1 obliges.

## WHY USE IT

Creative movement is a feature of effective attacking link up/comboination play. This activity focuses on some of the essential movements in a controlled environment and without pressure. Concentrate on movement and technical execution of the pass-receive-dribble combinations.

## SET UP

The area is 30x20 yards rectangle with three cones laid out along the end line at both ends - one in each corner and one in the center of each line. Groups of three players line up at both ends, one player behind each cone. The ball supply at both ends of the area diagonally opposite each other. Kwik Goal Air Manikins/poles are introduced in the second and third variation of the activity. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** One team goes at a time.

**More Challenging:** Introduce manikins and more complex movement patterns.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Teach players to time their movements in relation to the ball and begin to move creatively into space. Strength of the pass, location of the pass in front of the attacker and position of the teammates in support are all important teaching moments.

**Coaching Tips:** There could be a tendency for players to apply less than maximum effort on an activity they deem to be simple. To perform this activity well, players must fully concentrate and put forth maximal effort. A smooth and rhythmic sequence is only possible with a high degree of technical execution. Players should also scan the field (head-up) for oncoming players.

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# LINK UP PLAY 2V2 TO 3V3

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Tactical awareness, care in possession and creative movement *Top 3 competencies:* Penetrating dribbling, movement in front and behind defenders and short passing.

## HOW TO PLAY

To begin, alternate starts from one side and the other until the players know the game and objectives - then play when the players are ready. The attackers start with the ball and must combine to beat the defenders to the end line keeping the ball within the activity box. 2v2 to begin and progress to 3v3. If the attackers are able to play through or around the defense, the attacker with the ball attempts to score past the keeper. If the defenders win possession they attempt to dribble over the end line for a point.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The area is split in to left and right channels with an activity box marked by cones.
2. Two black attackers vs two white defenders. The attackers are able to play through/between the defenders and the attacker is 1v1 against the keeper.
3. The game progresses to 3v3. A striker starts alongside the 3 defenders.
4. The black attacker who initiated the passing combination makes an overlapping run and is found by a splitting pass. A great goal is scored.
5. A different attacking sequence. The striker receives the ball with his/her back to goal. The passer makes a run across the field to create space.
6. The third attack holds his/her run and when the moment is right cuts towards the striker and takes the ball on a dribble. The attackers work well at close quarters to create confusion for the defenders.

## WHY USE IT

This is the 'bedding-in'/reinforcement learning phase of our overall goal to establish link play between midfield and forward players. A central area of the field, close to goal will help transfer understanding to the game.

## SET UP

A 7v7 field (47x30 yards) is divided into two halves vertically to create left and right channels running the full length of the field. An activity box approximately 25x15 yards is marked with cones in the center of each half of the field. Attacking players line up behind 2 cones 5 yards outside the activity area and two defenders start from cones on the opposite side of the activity box. A goalkeeper is ready to save an attack, and another goalkeeper stands behind the goal to rotate in for the next attack. Both sides of the field set up in the same way. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Begin with a 2v1 in favor of the attackers.

**More Challenging:** Add a 3rd 'screening defender' and add a striker who starts between the two defenders.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Coach attacking players different combination options to beat the opponents - including, give and go, over-lapping and under-lapping runs and penetrating on the dribble.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage the attackers to fully utilize the width of the area and be attentive and constantly moving to create passing angles. When the opportunity arises to penetrate move quickly and decisively.

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# LINK UP PLAY 2 ZONE GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 4 & 5: 12-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Link play between midfield and attackers, attacking penetration and creative movement. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short and medium distances, dribbling and support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

To begin, alternate starts from one side and the other until the players know the game and objectives - then play when the players are ready. The attackers start with the ball and must combine to beat the defenders to the end line keeping the ball within the activity box. 2v2 to begin and progress to 3v3. If the attackers are able to play through or around the defense, the attacker with the ball attempts to score past the keeper. If the defenders win possession they attempt to dribble over the end line for a point.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The black team are attacking with 9 players and whites defending with 7 players.
2. The black team's keeper starts the activity with a throw to either fullback - wide and deep. 2 white defenders attempt to win possession from 7 attacking players in the defensive half.
3. The black team build up play through a number of slick passing combinations. A through ball releases a striker on goal.
4. The black midfield players and strikers move into new positions constantly and this movement opens passing lanes.
5. In the final sequence the black team build up around the outside of the white team and eventually play into the striker.
6. The striker holds the ball and eventually releases a ball back to a central midfield player. The fullback supports wide and a pass in front sends the player free and clear.

## WHY USE IT

This activity sets up game like conditions and is an excellent transitional activity. Two zones provide some

restrictions to encourage the attacking themes, including link-up, combination play and movement off the ball.

## SET UP

The area is a 9v9 field with the halfway line separating an attacking and defending zone. A couple of cones are placed in the defending zone to provide a starting position for the fullbacks. The attacking team with 9 players is set up in a 1-3-3-2 formation and the defending team with 7 players in a 1-4-1-1 formation. The goalkeeper for the attacking team restarts each sequence and has a supply of balls. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Reduce the number of defenders until the attacking team is capable of producing successful results.

**More Challenging:** Add more defenders, particularly in the defending zone to make it more challenging for the attackers to build up from the back.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The coach should implement previously learned attacking patterns.

**Coaching Tips:** Work with the players to identify triggers/visual cues such as a striker dropping deep to receive a pass or a wide midfield player having a 1v1 against the full back. Players need to see the implications of their movements to and from the person in possession.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# LINK UP PLAY 9V9 GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 4 & 5: 12-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Link play between midfield and attackers, attacking penetration and creative movement.. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short and medium distances, dribbling and support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

Play game conditions and use opportunities naturally occurring in the game to teach.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Black and white teams play 9v9.
2. The black team starts in a 1-3-3-2 formation and white in a 1-4-3-1 formation.
3. Link up play is possible by emphasizing the importance of retaining possession in the green area and by penetrating movement and passing in the red area.
4. The ability of the central midfield player in black to pass accurately and creatively is critically important, as is width provided by the wide midfield players.
5. The right fullback for the black team starts the sequence and makes an overlapping run.
6. The center midfield player finds some space and is able to find the fullback with a driven pass.

## WHY USE IT

The final activity in this sequence offers the players and coach to transfer their knowledge and performances to the game environment. The focus remains on developing combinations and building up play and the coach should freeze the game to coach and teach.

## SET UP

Play on a 9v9 field with two full teams. Use assistant referees to monitor offside. To encourage the attacking

team to build up play through the defensive and midfield lines, set up the team the coach is focusing on in a 1-3-3-2 and the opponent as a 1-4-3-1.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Reduce the number of defenders and/or add more attackers.

**More Challenging:** Change the formation of the defending team to make the build up more challenging - 1-3-3-2.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Players should participate with the intensity of a real game and structure link up play in a positive and creative way.

**Coaching Tips:** Take care in possession and be patient. Do not force a situation that is inappropriate. Players will need to move the ball quickly and be creative in their movement to create space for themselves and others. Keep the balance of the team.

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Overview & Player Benefits // **94**

Learning Pathways // **122 - 123**

Training Activities // **124 - 147**

# TECHNICAL TRAINING & SMALL-SIDED GAMES DIPLOMA

**CONTRIBUTIONS BY: VINCE GANZBERG, IAN MULLINER, ERIC OMAN, JASON SISNEROS, & MARK SPIEGEL**

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The following is an abstract from the Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma classroom session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. To earn the diploma, a participant was required to attend one theory and two practical sessions on this topic, plus attend 2 other elective sessions from the convention offering.

In the modern game the ability of players to make decisions and solve problems, in an ever-changing playing environment, has become paramount to success. Technical training and small sided games remain at the forefront of developing intelligent and technically sound players. Research clearly demonstrate the benefits of small sided games, such as more opportunities for players to dribble, pass, shoot and beat defenders 1v1. Additionally the environment is designed to repeatedly present basic tactical situations leading to more competent individuals and better teams.

The Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma breaks down the learning pathway, starting with our U6-U8 players playing 4v4, progressing to 7v7 and concludes with 9v9. Formations, training activities, practice-plan progressions in addition to practical in-game coaching methodology is addressed with a view to equipping coaches with practical 'takeaways' they can use to help young players reach their full potential.

The focus is on the number 2, 3, 7 and 11 players in their roles, responsibilities, technique and decision making. Technical progressions will be presented and advantages of measuring a players development explored. While we view technique and vision as performance characteristics every player needs to improve upon, we also acknowledge the importance of transferring the knowledge of "how" to do a skill into an understanding of "why" and

"when" to do it. In order to teach and apply knowledge, functional training of the 2,3,7 and 11 is used to illustrate how to train the practical demands of the positions using high repetitions to help players retain the decision making processes.

The following is an excerpt from the coaching manual: 'Coaching 4v4, 7v7 & 9v9 Small Sided Soccer'.

### A RATIONALE FOR SMALL-SIDED GAMES

In the last decade numerous research studies in soccer and other sports have been conducted to determine if performance, emotional and cognitive benefits exist for young players participating in small sided games. Different playing formats have been tested with the same age groups to determine which format is best. The evidence pointing to the benefits of small sided games is conclusive as evidenced in the list below. What is less indisputable is what the best format for a particular age group is.

One can argue that developmental readiness is far more important than the age of the player, particularly considering developmental differences - plus or minus 2 years of chronological age have been reported for children of the same age. One does not however need to conduct a formal research project to instantly recognize opportunities small sided games offer our young players. It is anticipated a parent or coach observing an appropriate small sided game format see many of the benefits listed:



#### PLAYER BENEFITS

1. Fewer players on the field increases the likelihood of individuals contacting the ball.
2. Fewer players increase the size of the available space and consequently the game encourages players to be more physically active as they have to cover more ground.
3. Players are more readily involved in attacking and defending situations.
4. At the youngest age groups where chasing after the ball is commonplace, there are less players chasing after the player with the ball.
5. Fewer decisions to make in a less complicated and easier to understand environment.
6. A gradual transition in player numbers creates a clear learning pathway for coaches to plan player development opportunities commensurate with the child's physical, emotional and cognitive readiness.
7. Players report to having more fun in contrast to playing games with more players.
8. Goal scoring opportunities are generally more frequent and more players are in a position to score.
9. Better utilization of available field space results in more players playing and less watching.
10. The number of 'lines of interaction' are limited. These are the potential number of passing options for the player on the ball. Each time a player is removed from the field, the decision making difficulty of the game environment decreases.



## LEARNING PATHWAY

A soccer learning pathway is defined as the ideal sequence of learning experiences to reach a level of competence – in this case to play 11v11. The list of learning experiences is numerous and includes: small sided games, pick-up games, training, self-directed training time, supplemental training (such as speed and agility) and cross training with other sports. Routinely, clubs offer a variety of learning experiences that are disconnected and rarely build towards an end goal or objective. If your organization does not have a well-defined learning pathway or one that has been updated to address new small sided game formats, now is an excellent time to discuss, debate and create a Learning Pathway covering the entire youth soccer experience. Engaging all key constituent groups contributing to programming for infants, pre-adolescent, adolescents and young adults through the ages of 18 is critically important. This is no small task but is essential for organizations seeking to raise coaching and playing standards.

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

One of the inevitable challenges of designing a Learning Pathway is accounting for development variability of children from the same age group. One must ask the question – Will all or only some of the learners have the physical, mental and emotional readiness to benefit fully from the experience? The diagram on the next page illustrates a rudimentary overview of the youth soccer experience featuring the Learning Pathway, Continuum of Player Development and Competencies.

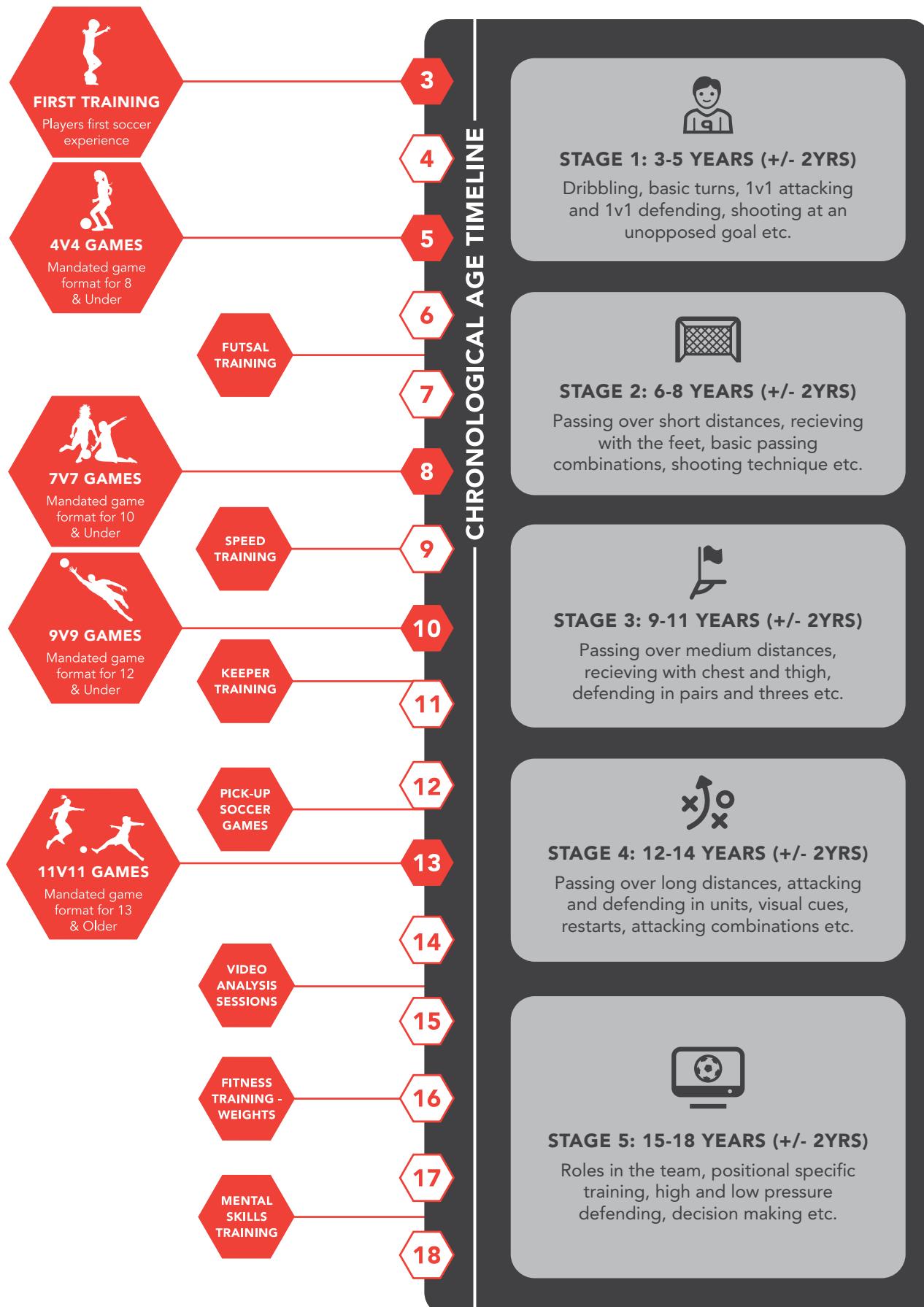
Individuals having had opportunities to coach infant and pre-pubescent players U12 and younger will attest to observing noticeable development differences between age groups, within age groups and between genders. Furthermore, during the formative years of participa-

tion it is common to see individual performance levels fluctuate dramatically during relatively short periods in the same season. With this in mind, it is possible for the learning pathway and the performance capabilities of players to be out of sync. Failure to recognize and plan for this eventuality may lead to players frustrated or bored by experiences not meeting their level of competence or commitment, and potentially leading to drop-out from the sport.

## TRANSITIONING PLAYERS ALONG THE CONTINUUM

To further illustrate this point, let's consider the transition from 4v4 to 7v7 – 2 'events' along the learning pathway. I have previously discussed that smaller player numbers increase the likelihood of touches of the ball, greater engagement of players and improved probabilities of scoring etc. Correspondingly, each time a player is added to the field the degree of complexity increases. In fact, the potential number of passing options for the player on the ball jumps dramatically from 4v4 – 12 lines of interaction to 7v7 – 42 lines of interaction. To be precise the game becomes 300% more challenging for an 8 year old (U9) playing 7v7, than for a 7 year old (U8) playing 4v4.

Adopting a long term perspective is imperative. Establishing clear performance expectations and providing a detailed road map directing players and coaches along the youth soccer journey is vital. The proficiency of players will very much determine when the coach can transition the team. Ideally the coach can commence transition work with players at least 12 months prior to stepping to the next game format by layering in more demanding technical and tactical concepts. This can all be achieved by training in small groups and units without requiring the coach to introduce a full complement of players on the field.





# PASSING DIAMOND

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing and receiving, Dribbling (Running with the Ball) mobility, support. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing or Dribbling to penetrate, receiving to play forward, speed of play.

## HOW TO PLAY

The activity works in a rotation - first in a clockwise direction and then an anti-clockwise direction. In the first sequence, the activity commences with #4 passing to #2 who receives the ball on the outside of the manikin. #4 runs to take the position occupied by #2. #2 dribbles just over half the distance towards #9 and makes a pass. #9 passes to #3 and #3 dribbles to the manikin where the first pass was made. As #3 rounds the manikin, a pass is made to #4. All players move up to the next manikin after completing their task. In sequence two, the #9 moves away from the manikin to create separation as #2 approaches. #9 then makes a move towards #3 and #2 combines with a pass into the path of #9. In the third sequence, two cones are added to change the angle of the dribble, passing and receiving combinations.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

- #4 passes to #2, #2 dribbles and passes to #9, #9 passes to #3 and #3 dribbles to restart the sequence.
- After a set time-period or number of passes reverse the direction of ball and player movement.
- In sequence two, #9 checks away from the manikin to create separation.
- #9 then moves behind the manikin and #2 passes into the path of #9 in front of the manikin.
- Two cones are added to create a different angle for the dribble, pass and receiving the ball.
- #2 has to open the body to move seamlessly into a dribble. #9 backs away from the manikin and allows the ball to run across his/her body.

## WHY USE IT

This activity teaches players to apply the functional technique and movement required for Center Backs (#4 & #5), Fullbacks (#2 & #3), Wide Midfield Players (#7 &

#11) and Central Attacker (#9). Players learn how to penetrate by going around the opponent's defense.

## SET UP

The area is 20x20 yards square with manikins used to create a diamond shape with 4 points. 4 players start at each manikin and the coach is positioned to observe and instruct. 1 ball is used to start and introduce a second ball as players progress and patterns become smooth.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Remove the manikins and increase the number of allowable touches.

**More Challenging:** How many passes in 30 sec? How many times around without a mistake. Introduce a second ball.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** To introduce players to the correct pass surface of the foot to receive and dribble for pace and accuracy. Players are also taught to create the correct supporting angles with movement away from a defender (manikin).

**Coaching Tips:** Focus on developing individual technical excellence - 1) watch the ball all the way on to your foot and all the way off your foot, 2) deliver a pass to a teammate allowing them to play forward, 3) receive with the intent to play forward with a longer touch to encourage acceleration, 4) position the body to be able to play forward with your first touch, 5) move into a support position and create space - get wide.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# 4V4 END ZONE GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing and receiving, Dribbling (Running with the Ball) mobility, support. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing or Dribbling to penetrate, receiving to play forward, speed of play.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach works with the attacking team to begin and focuses on the functional attacking performance of 4 players. Both teams start with 4 players on the field, but the attacking team has a 4v2 advantage - 2 players on the defensive team become 'Zombie' (passive) defenders who cannot attempt to win possession. The team with possession can score by dribbling into the end zone or by passing to a team mate in the end zone. After a goal is scored the opponent starts with the next possession. Play until 1 team has scored 5 goals or play for 4 minutes.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 4 whites are attacking the 4 blues. Two of the blue defenders start as passive 'Zombies'.
2. #4 passes wide to #11 who manages to find #7 penetrating behind a Zombie. A perfect pass is rewarded with #7 dribbling into the end zone for a point. The movement of #9 creates space for #7 to run into.
3. As the game develops, there is now only 1 Zombie defender. The white's #4 dribbles wide and #11 moves infield to create space for #4.
4. #11 receives a pass from #4 and draws a defender to the ball. #11 passes wide to #7 who dribbles forward and combines around the defender with #9. A well worked give and go ends in a score in the end zone.
5. Ball and player movement must now be more refined and exact as the Zombies have all been removed - two teams playing 4v4 without defensive restrictions.
6. #7 and #4 combine to switch play. #9 draws a defender away from the ball carrier and as #11 penetrates on the dribble, space opens for #7 to receive a pass for an easy score.

## WHY USE IT

This game related activity progresses the previous activity and teaches players to apply the functional technique

and movement required for Center Backs (#4 & #5), Fullbacks (#2 & #3), Wide Midfield Players (#7 & #11) and Central Attacker (#9). Players learn how to penetrate by going around the opponent's defense.

## SET UP

The area is 30x20 yards 4v4 field with a 5x20 yards end zone at each end. Each team start with 4 players. The coach is positioned to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Make more of the opponents Zombies.

**More Challenging:** Remove the Zombies and add a touch restriction for the attacking players - 2-3 touches.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** To introduce players to the correct pass surface of the foot to receive and dribble for pace and accuracy. Players are also taught to create the correct supporting angles with movement away from a defender (manikin).

**Coaching Tips:** Focus on developing individual technical excellence - 1) watch the ball all the way onto your foot and all the way off your foot, 2) deliver a pass to a teammate allowing them to play forward, 3) receive with the intent to play forward with a longer touch to encourage acceleration, 4) know when and where to provide support for a teammate and 5) decide how and when to penetrate.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# 4V4 FOUR GOAL GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing and receiving, dribbling (running with the ball) width and support. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing or dribbling to penetrate, prioritizing the team to play forward, speed of play.

## HOW TO PLAY

Play a 4v4 game with typical rules for this format. Both teams attempt to score in the opponent's 2 goals. After a goal is scored opponent starts with the ball. Play until a team scores 5 goals or for a maximum of 4 minutes. Players are instructed the coach will stop the flow of play a few times to make a point or correction. The coach will remain on the sideline and will enter the playing field with an announcement of "FREEZE", and with the players frozen the coach will make the coaching point.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Red #7 is under pressure from the defender and passes back to the deep lying #4 who switches the point of attack to #11.
2. #11 dribbles at the defender, #9 creates space and checks back to the empty space to receive the pass from #11. #9 turns, shoots and scores.
3. #7 passes to #4 and makes a penetrating run wide.
4. #9 creates space by overloading the left flank and draws the defender from the central space. #11 Dribbles into the empty space and makes a perfect pass to the late running #7 to score.
5. #9 passes the ball back to #4. As the yellow defender commits to applying pressure, #4 passes the ball to #7 who dribbles at the defender.
6. On #7's first touch #9 makes a diagonal support run dragging the defender out of position. #7 plays a long diagonal pass behind the defense for #11 to score.

## WHY USE IT

This activity teaches players to switch the point of attack, passing to the deep lying player (#4) and using the width provided by wide midfield players (#7 & #11).

## SET UP

The area is 30x20 yards, a 4v4 field with 2 small portable goals 2 yards from the corner at each end. Each team

start with 4 players. The coach is positioned to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** To increase the likelihood of the attacking team achieving width and combinations with #7 & #11, the coach can remove 1-2 defenders to create an attacking overload. The coach can also restrict 2 players from each team to stay in the attacking half.

**More Challenging:** Place a time restriction on the attacking team to get the ball forward and/or add 2-3 touch restrictions for each player.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The primary objective is for the attacking team to make the field as 'big' as possible by spreading wide and long. Creating space on the field typically favors the attackers. #7/#11 - to the left and right of the diamond should stay as wide as possible to 'stretch' the defense horizontally. This shape will create 'seams' between the defenders allowing space for a penetrating pass to the striker. If the defenders remain in a compact shape, the attackers exploit the width and play 'around' the defenders.

**Coaching Tips:** Try to make stoppages to the game short and instruction concise. Ideally, the coach is able to identify a good example of a passing combination in wide areas to compliment and reinforce.

## NOTES:

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# 2V2 + 4 PASSING COMBINATIONS

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Supporting angles, combinational play, passing and receiving. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing to combine, creating space, possession in tight spaces.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective is for the 2 teams competing in the middle to score points by making wall passes with the bumper players. The bumpers serve as supporting players and offer the team in possession with ample opportunity to combine. Each team plays in the middle for 90 second blocks and the team with the most wall passes wins. Wall passes can occur either with or without the perimeter players.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 4 red players start on the periphery and are available to support the player/s in possession.
2. White and yellow teams start 1v1 with a player for each team ready to join when passed the ball. A pass to a teammate allows both teams to strengthen and play 2v2+4.
3. The white team combine for the first part of the wall pass combination, but a yellow player intercepts the return pass.
4. The yellow team must now transition to attack and the white team to defending.
5. The yellow team score 2 points in quick succession with two wall pass combinations.
6. At first the yellow players combine for 1 point around a defender and then the yellow player and a red outside player combine for a second point.

## WHY USE IT

This activity emphasizes passing angles and combination play with the focus on support players moving after making a pass.

## SET UP

The area is a 15x15 yards square with 4 support (bumper) players on each side, and attackers and defenders play 2v2 inside the area. The coach takes a position to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Increase the size of the area to provide the attackers with more time and space. Allow the attacking team unlimited touches.

**More Challenging:** Decrease the size of the area and add a 2 touch condition.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Teach players how to recognize and create wall passing opportunities and build repetition on combinational scenarios.

**Coaching Tips:** The key is to emphasize the sequence of possession you most want the players to improve on and reward that action. It is likely the defense will adjust to prevent the attackers achieving the coach's objectives and this should be encouraged as the activity becomes more unrealistic. Helping the attackers to develop more than one strategy will address a defense over-playing a particular pattern. This will be a good progression from teaching basic wall passing and allow the coach to move ahead to coach 2nd and 3rd attacker support and combinational play.

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# 4V1 TWO TOUCH MINIMUM

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Passing and receiving, speed of play against pressure, supporting angles *Top 3 competencies:* Passing to possess, passing to penetrate, width in attack

## HOW TO PLAY

Every player should be rotated through the 4 attacking and 1 defending position. Typically, each player defends once, but if you are devoting more time to 4v1 you may wish to rotate two or three times through. The players on the attack are positioned as 2 wide players and 2 top of the diamond target players (height and depth). The wide players are only permitted to pass the ball from one target to the other - no direct passes. The ball starts with a wide player at the center point of the sideline. The offense scores every time they switch the ball from one end of the diamond to the other via the wide players. The 4 offensive players need to take at least 2 touches every time they receive the ball. This condition applies pressure on the receivers technique and gives the defender time to adjust. The defense scores every time the offense plays a ball out of bounds, plays 1 touch, defender intercepts, tackles the ball, or an attacking player is offside. Adding an offside line is a progression not suited for all abilities. Games typically last 45 seconds to 90 seconds and then the defender rotates to the attack.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 4 red attackers play against 1 yellow defender. A red player in the sideline starts the activity with a pass to either target.
2. The receiving player must take at least two touches before making a pass. The yellow defender works very hard to close space and prevent a penetrating pass.
3. A point is scored each time a pass is made from the wide players to a target player.
4. The target players cannot pass directly to each other. The red players must remain a yard from the edge of the area.
5. In the final sequence the coach has added an offside condition. This forces the wide red attackers to work hard to maintain an on-side position and the defender to pressure and catch the reds offside.

6. The target player releases the ball too soon and the wide red player is too slow to get back onside. A point to the defender.

## WHY USE IT

This activity places a premium on the receiving players first touch, movement by teammates to create supporting angles and speed of play in possession. Defensively this activity challenges players close space at speed and prevent passing lanes developing.

## SET UP

The set up is an 8x15 yards channel, although the width of the area can be reduced to add more challenge. 4 attacking players start on the periphery of the area and 1 defender starts in the center. The coach stands in a position to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Make the grid wider.

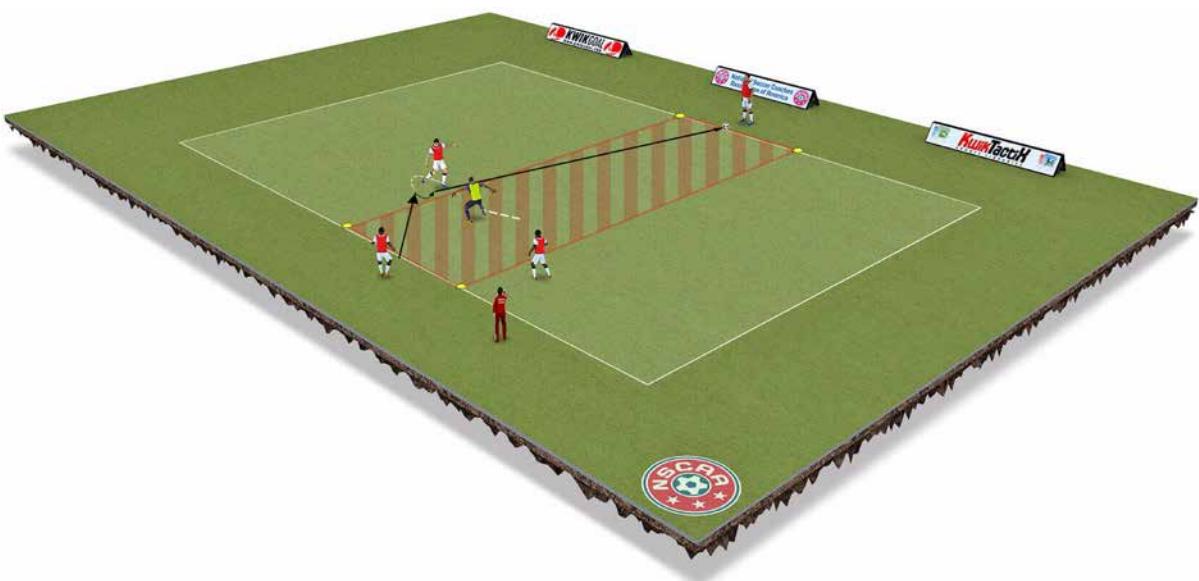
**More Challenging:** Play in a 6 yards wide grid and add the offside condition.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Test the technical proficiency of players using tight spaces and defensive pressure. Work with the 2nd attacker understand angles of support.

**Coaching Tips:** Help players decide what to do with the ball as it is in motion. Have the defender rotate to a target position so they can rest.

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# 4V3 FINAL PASS GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Angles of support, combining to penetrate, technical execution and timing of runs. *Top 3 competencies:* Combination play, passing technique, and mobility of 3rd attacker.

## HOW TO PLAY

A defender commences the activity with service to one of the 3 awaiting attackers. On receipt of the pass, the attacking players come forward and attempt to score in one of the two goals. The attackers are only allowed to score from the scoring zone. The 3 defenders attempt to win possession and dribble over the defenders goal line for a point. As the activity progresses, add an offside line - the line separating the two zones unless the last defender is inside scoring zone.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Three red defenders play against 4 yellow attackers.
2. The yellow attackers receive a pass from the reds and attempt to penetrate into the scoring zone to score in either goal.
3. The red team move up to put pressure on the yellows. The offside line is introduced between the midfield and scoring zones.
4. A nice combination between the yellow team releases an overlapping fullback. Unfortunately the yellow target player strays offside and the goal is disallowed.
5. In the next sequence the yellows again press forward and the reds are able to win possession.
6. The red player is first to react to the challenge as the ball squirts free, resulting in a penetrating dribble over the yellow's goal line for a red team point.

## WHY USE IT

This activity works on two important aspects of attacking play - firstly, player's movement to establish passing angles for wide players and secondly penetrating passes to release a runner in the final third of the field. It is a good activity that can be developed to larger fields and full size goals with keepers.

## SET UP

The set up is an 4v4 field with 2 portable goals placed a couple of yards from the corners at one end. A line of cones mark two zones - a 10x20 yards scoring zone and a similar size midfield zone. 3 defenders start behind the end line in left, central and right positions and have a supply of balls. 3 attackers stand opposite 20 yards away on the edge of the midfield zone and 1 attacker starts as a target player next to the central defender.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add a 'plus' player to the attack to create a 5v3 or allow the 4 attackers to have 'bumpers'/ support players on the wings.

**More Challenging:** Add a 2 touch condition in the midfield zone and/or make the field smaller.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Help players to develop awareness of combination play to create penetration and execution of passes to get behind the defense with proper weight and texture. Create a rhythm and tempo between 1st, 2nd and 3rd attackers in possession with a view to penetrate.

**Coaching Tips:** Establishing the correct support angles is key for 2nd and 3rd attackers. Technical execution of passes and receiving the ball are also important to stress.

## NOTES:

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# 4V2 + 2 TRANSITION

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Transition from defense to attack, penetration and width. *Top 3 competencies:* Penetration on the dribble, technical application and decision making.

## HOW TO PLAY

Play a normal 4v4 game. When defending, each team's wide players (#7 & #11) are 'Zombies'. Zombies are not allowed to defend and must stand still or walk without interfering with the attack. The Zombies come 'alive' whenever their team is in possession. Introduce the off-side rule for players U9 and older.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Both teams of 4 players set up in a diamond formation - Center back, left and right midfield players and a striker.
2. At the point of transition, the defending team play with 1, 2 or 3 Zombie defenders who cannot interfere with the attack.
3. The blue #7 penetrates past the white Zombie defender.
4. A covering defender makes an interception. The white team's Zombie becomes alive and a blue player becomes a Zombie.
5. The white team transitions quickly into attack. A white attacker dribbles in field and this leaves space wide for a supporting player.
6. Support quickly arrives and a perfect pass wide is driven into the net. 1-0 the white team!

## WHY USE IT

This activity works on two important aspects of attacking play - firstly, player's movement to establish passing angles for wide players and secondly penetrating passes to release a runner in the final third of the field. It is a good activity that can be developed to larger fields and full size goals with keepers.

## SET UP

Play a normal 4v4 game. When defending, each team's wide players (#7 & #11) are 'Zombies'. Zombies are not allowed to defend and must stand still or walk without

interfering with the attack. The Zombies come 'alive' whenever their team is in possession. Introduce the off-side rule for players U9 and older.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add a third defending 'Zombie' for each team creating a 4v1.

**More Challenging:** Reduce the number of Zombies for each team and make the only Zombie the striker (#9) so #7 and #11 now defend each other in the flank areas.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Coaches should work with the attacking team to improve transition from defending to attack. The attacking team should make the field as 'big' as possible with #7 and #11 moving wide, the center forward (#9) playing high and the central defender (#4) dropping into a deep supporting position. With the opponent's wide players becoming Zombies, the wide channels would be a logical choice to attack and play around the defense.

**Coaching Tips:** Help the players to react positively at the moment of an attacking turnover - 1) exploit the opponent's weakness and seek to pass to #7 or #11 quickly, 2) the wide players should immediately move wide quickly and establish space on the flanks, and 3) on receipt of the ball #7 and #11 should attack the space quickly to beat an opponent or pass.

## NOTES:

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# TWENTY ONE

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Running with the ball to score, passing over a short and medium distance, defending 1v1. *Top 3 competencies:* Dribbling, passing combinations and transition from defense to attack.

## HOW TO PLAY

Commence the game with a pass from the coach to one of the players on the field. The objective for both teams is to score '21' points before the opponent. The player receiving the ball has a choice, either attempt to score 1v1 or pass to a peripheral player. On receipt of a pass, the peripheral player enters the field and 1 player from the defending team also enters the field to create a 2v2. The attacking team can add up to 4 players using this strategy and each time a defender enters to balance the teams. There are no goalkeepers. When the ball goes out of bounds or a goal is scored, restart with another 1v1 game. As more players enter the field, the value of a goal reduces: 1v1 = 4 points, 2v2 = 3 points, 3v3 = 2 points, 4v4 = 1 point. The idea is to finish with exactly 21 points - if a team exceeds 21 points the score is rolled back 11.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The coach passes the ball to the blue player, who is playing 1v1 against a white defender.
2. Each team has 5 teammates waiting around the edge of the field at the defending end to come on.
3. The blue attacker decides to bring on another teammate and passes to the sideline. A white team defender also enters the field.
4. On receipt of the pass, the blue player dribbles into the opponent's half and is confronted by a white defender. The passing blue attacker makes a marvelous run and creates a 2v1.
5. In this sequence the blue team has retained possession and passed again to the sideline. An attacker and defender enter to create a 3v3.
6. A penetrating dribble and shot results in a blue team goal and 2 points. All players leave the field and players rotate around the outside so everyone receives equal opportunity.

## WHY USE IT

This activity provides an ideal environment to challenge an individual's decision making and technical application. Players will learn the visual cues to indicate the best option, whether to play 1v1 and dribble or to pass to a teammate.

## SET UP

The set up is a 4v4 field (30x20 yards) with an appropriate size goal at each end. Each team starts with one player on the field and 4-5 teammates on the periphery at the defensive end of the field. The coach stands in a position to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add an all-time offensive player to always create numbers up. Allow one of the opponents to enter from the other team's half of the field near the goal to offer a target option.

**More Challenging:** Restrict touches and add an offside line to encourage defenders to step forward and create space behind the defenders.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The coach should work with players to identify situations favoring a pass or an attempt to beat an opponent with a dribble. The objective is to sharpen players decision making and expose them to multiple situations requiring this thought process.

**Coaching Tips:** If the coach wishes to create a numerical advantage for the attacking team and opportunities for passing combinations, the coach can allow only the attacking team to add numbers when the pass is made.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# 7V7 COUNTER GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Create space by spreading high, deep and wide, finishing and 1v1 attacking/defending. *Top 3 competencies:* Dribbling, passing over short and medium distances and take on moves.

## HOW TO PLAY

The attacking team's goalkeeper serves the ball to a teammate and is available as a supporting player to the attacking team. Play will always restart with the keeper after a goal has been scored by either team. The defending team starts with 2 'Zombie'/passive players who are not allowed to defend. This condition provides the attacking team with a 7v5 numerical advantage to begin the activity. When the defending team win possession, the Zombie defenders are now live attackers and attempt to score in the 2 portable goals. Both have 7 active players if a turnover occurs. Play for 5 minutes.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The blue team's keeper passes to #2, who passes wide to #7. The wide player dribbles at the defender, as the defender applies pressure.
2. #7 uses the movement of #9 (striker) as a decoy and beats the defender 1v1. #9 checks back inside to meet a cut-back cross and finishes with power across the keeper.
3. A combination between the keeper and #2 draws a defender to the ball. The keeper switches the point of attack to the left flank (#3) and the left defender passes to #11.
4. As the defender moves to press, #9 checks to the flank and #11 passes across the front of the defender. #9 creates separation and crosses to the far post for #7 to arrive in time to finish past the keeper.
5. The keeper plays direct to #9 who passes back to the central midfielder (#6). #6 plays a diagonal pass to the #7 who holds the ball and waits for support.
6. #7 releases a short pass to the overlapping right defender (#2) who crosses the ball to the far post where #11 arrives late to finish.

## WHY USE IT

This is a 7v7 activity designed to emphasize how a team can penetrate around an opponent's defense and create scoring opportunities from the flank channels.

## SET UP

The activity is played on a 7v7 field (47x30 yards) with an appropriate size goal at one end and 2 portable counter-attacking goals 32 yards on the build-out line at the other end. Each team has a goalkeeper and 6 outfield players. The keeper for the attacking team starts in the center of the build-out line with a supply of balls and restarts the game. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Increase the number of attacking players or increase the number of Zombie defenders.

**More Challenging:** Remove the Zombie players and play 7v7 both ways. Use the breakout lines as off-sides lines.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The attacking team should attempt to effectively spread out the defense by moving the ball quickly to attack down the flanks to create scoring opportunities..

**Coaching Tips:** The coach should work with the attacking team to identify the visual cues that indicate if the best strategy is to play through, around or over the defense. If the defender drops centrally and towards the goal, the attacking space will be wide and the team in possession should move the ball to the flanks quickly.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# 7V0 ATTACKING PATTERN PLAY

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Create length and width, speed of play and shooting. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short and medium distances, receiving and support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

Play starts in two places. In the defensive half of the field keeper and 2 defenders work the ball towards the halfway line and back to the goalkeeper. In the attacking half of the field the defensive center midfield player (#6) combines with the two wide midfield players (#7 & #11) and Striker (#9) to establish passing patterns and scoring opportunities from the flank channels.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The keeper passes to the fullback (#3) who dribbles to the halfway line, and passes to the central midfield player (#6).
2. #6 passes wide to #11 who passes to the center forward (#9). #9 switches to the right midfield player (#7) who receives the ball dribbles into the penalty area and takes a shot.
3. The next sequence involves the keeper passing to the fullbacks who check inside first then back outside to the flanks - bending their runs to receive the ball.
4. Simultaneously, #6 switches the point of attack, combining with #7 and #11. #11 dribbles down the flank and plays a give and go around the cone with the central forward (#9). The cross is finished by #7 making a late run.
5. The back line combines with the midfield and forward players. The ball starts with the keeper and is worked to #11 on the left flank.
6. #6 switches the play to the right flank, where #7 and #9 combine to go through the wide gate. #7 crosses for #11 arriving at the far post to finish against a scrambling keeper.

## WHY USE IT

This activity helps the coach establish identifiable patterns of play for the team to put into practice with particular emphasis on utilizing the wide players (#2, #3, #7 & #11). Pattern play helps coaches to develop a team style.

## SET UP

The activity is played on a 7v7 field (47x30 yards) with an appropriate size goal at both ends. A 2-3 yards cone gate is established on the build-out line adjacent to the sideline in the attacking half. The attacking team start with a keeper and 6 outfield players set up in a 1-2-3-1 formation. The attacking team plays mainly unopposed, but there is a keeper at the other end. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Players stand, pass and receive in position.

**More Challenging:** Limit touches for each player. Time how long it takes to get to goal and attempt to beat the time. Add defenders. Add a second team going in the other direction.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Develop patterns of passing and movement that translate into the game. Rehearse ways to effectively spread out the defense to create scoring opportunities by going around.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players to be technically clean - Passing accuracy, pace, angles and distance of support.

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# 9V9 TRANSITION GAME

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Create length and width, speed of play and shooting. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short and medium distances, receiving and support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

The game starts with one team attacking and one team defending. An attacking player passes to a support player on one side of the field and enters the field. Another attacker joins the passer and receiving player and 2 defenders rush forward from the other end of the field. The attackers have a keeper and 3 attackers and defenders a keeper and 2 defenders (4v3). Both teams try to score. Initially only 1 of the wide support players join, but progress to 2 support players. The flank plus players can only enter the field after receiving a pass and are not allowed to defend. They must leave the field once the attacking team loses possession. Play for 2 minutes or until a goal is scored before the next group enters the field.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The white attacker passes left to the support player. Another white attacker joins to create a 3v2. The defender applies pressure.
2. The wide player skips past the defender at ease and chips the ball over the keeper into the net.
3. As soon as a goal is scored all players on the field leave and a new group of attacking and defending players enter the field. The white attacker starts with a cross field pass.
4. The white attacker recognizes an opportunity to make an overlapping run to receive a pass from the support player. A dribble and cut back for the oncoming player results in a goal.
5. In the final sequence the white and blue teams start with 3 players. The white's keeper distributes to the right. A switch of play to the other flank and another play enters the field. Whites now have a 5v3.
6. The blue team is unable to cope with quick ball movement and support runs from the whites. A great combination releases the attacker for a goal.

## WHY USE IT

This activity provides the coach with a set-up to help players effectively recognize a transitional moment as soon as the team wins possession of the ball back from the opponent. It encourages the players to spread out and penetrate by going through or around the opponent.

## SET UP

The set up is a rectangle 35x30 yards with appropriate size goals at both ends. Halfway, two markers are placed outside each sideline to mark the starting point for the support players. 2 players start at each marker and 4-6 players from each team start behind the end line. A keeper is in goal for both teams. The coach stands in a position to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Only have 1 defender.

**More Challenging:** Add a defender on every pass made by the attacking team.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Speed of play to penetrate as quickly as possible to create scoring opportunities.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage the attacking players to spread out (look for a triangle shape). Emphasize passing accuracy and pace and teach players to know where and when to provide angles of support.

## NOTES:

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# 9V9 FLANK PLAY

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Width, penetration and switching the point of attack. *Top 3 competencies:* Speed of play, crossing and finishing.

## HOW TO PLAY

The game starts with the coach working with the attacking team. The attackers have a 9v6 advantage when in possession with the three defenders in the vests passive. The objective is for the attacking team to work the ball forward and exploit the numerical advantage. The space and time will likely occur in wide positions occupied by two passive defenders. If the defenders win possession, they should counter attack. The players in vests become active in transition to attack.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The white team attack with 9 players. The blue team defend with 3v4 the middle and 2 passive defenders wide.
2. The whites combine through the middle, drawing the defenders centrally. The ball is transferred to #7 who uses the space wide to penetrate and cross. The striker times the run into the box perfectly and scores.
3. The blues add an extra defender centrally. The whites play confidently through the middle.
4. The pace of ball and player movement is too much for the blue defenders and the overlapping defender (#3) receives a perfect through ball from #11 who drives inside. The fullback makes no mistake - goal!
5. As the activity progresses the combinations and patterns become more intricate and yellows are now full strength.
6. On this occasion the ball is switched from left to right and the right midfield player (#7) beats two defenders on the dribble and smashes home.

## WHY USE IT

This is a terrific activity to assist a team to establish width and to spread out the opponent's defense. The attacking objective is to penetrate by going around the opposing defense, achieved by effectively switching the point of attack.

## SET UP

The set up is a 9v9 field (75x47 yards) with two 7 yard wide flank channels in the attacking half of the field. An appropriate size goal is at both ends. Each team has 9 players and the coach stands in a position to observe and instruct. The defending team start with 3 passive defenders in vests. The passive defenders eventually go live. Position one of the players in a scrimmage vest in each flank channel and the other in the central channel.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Increase the number of passive defenders.

**More Challenging:** Do not play with passive defenders.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Quick combination plays through the middle (highlighted in red) to open up space in the flank channels.

**Coaching Tips:** The attacking team should be encouraged to get wide quickly to stretch the opponent's defense. Moving the ball to the middle will require the opponent to collapse the defense centrally and this will leave space wide in the flank channels. Switch the point of attack when you have a numerical advantage.

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Mindset - Cultivating a Master  
Coaching Mentality // 149  
Training Sessions // 150 - 161

# MINDSET - CULTIVATING A MASTER COACHING MENTALITY

CONTRIBUTIONS BY: BEN FREAKLEY

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The following is an abstract from the Mindset - Cultivating a Master Coach Mentality classroom session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. This session was an elective session, an option for individuals seeking to earn a special topics diploma. It is also associated with a practical session, **Beat Me Twice - Bringing the competitive mindset into individual, group and team defending.**

# "Those who have the power to change hold the future in their hands."

Great coaches take teams to heights they could not reach on their own. At the NSCAA Convention in 2007, Gerard Houllier (former Liverpool Coach) challenged the audience: "Those who have the power to change hold the future in their hands."

The coach's journey to mastery is a story about change and each coach's ability to seek it, learn from it, embrace it or deflect it. When it comes to teaching pillars of the game to players, the coach's mindset is the driving force of how these critical components will be taught. Mindset, 'a rock solid set of non-negotiable beliefs about oneself' can be influenced by many things. Upbringing, background in the game, mentors and years of experience all play pivotal roles in shaping the coach's mindset.

A commonly asked coaching question challenges coaches to reveal their mindset: 'what's your coaching philosophy?'

Before we lead, we must ask...How have I been led? A coach's leadership style, philosophy, behaviors, interactions and decisions all come from somewhere, but where? Part of the coach's mindset stems from how he or she has been led. By reaching back and reflecting on our own experiences, we can gain a better understanding of how we do or don't want to lead.

## MINDSET IMPACTS

The coach's mindset has implications on multiple levels. At a minimum, a coach's "non negotiables" will influence:

- His/her resiliency (relationship with self)
- The coach - player relationship
- The coach - team relationship
- Temperature of the training environment
- His/her team's relationship between pressure and performance



## DESIGN OR DEFAULT

The evolution of the coach is constant. Can coaches accelerate their development by paying attention to their mindset? Creating a mindset by design v default gives coaches more ownership in their pathway to mastery. Spending time reflecting on where one has been and where one wants to go emphasizes a values based approach to coaching over an emotional based approach. Questions that coaches must continuously ask and answer of themselves include:

- What is my philosophy?
- How has my mindset been shaped?
- What are my "non negotiable beliefs?"
- How does my mindset towards the game and competition influence my players?

Research shows intrinsic motivation pushes us to learn something / feel something / master something. Player development stalls when coaching development stalls. The coaches ability to create a growth environment for their players is only possible when they themselves are on a growth mindset journey.



# 1V1 WITH TWO DEFENDING OPPORTUNITIES

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5: 6-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** Top 3 themes: 1v1 attacking, 1v1 defending and transition. Top 3 competencies: Closing space as a defender, patience and composure and a defending mindset.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach assigns a defensive and offensive team at the start of the activity. A player on the defending team starts with possession and passes across the area to either group of attackers. As the defender plays the ball to an attacker, the passer runs out to defend and close down the attacking player. There are two attacking objectives to the activity. Firstly, the attacker must attempt to beat the defender by dribbling over the opponent's sideline. If the attacker is successful, the second objective is for the attacker to score in either goal. Following a successful dribble, the attacker sprints to a corner, collects a ball and attempts to score. If the defender is successful in winning possession, he/she should assume the attacking objectives of that particular phase - dribble over the line or score a goal.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The red defender passes to the yellows in either attacking line.
2. The passer immediately enters the area and closes space quickly. The defender seeks to win possession.
3. The yellow attacker beats the defender and crosses the sideline for a point. The attacker immediately collects a ball from the corner and attempts to score in either goal.
4. The red defender recovers quickly and confronts the attacker.
5. The red defender wins possession and transitions to attack. A goal is scored. Both players leave the field.
6. Play 4-5 minute intervals with the same attacking/defending teams and then switch.

## WHY USE IT

This is a multi-directional fun activity providing players coaches with an environment to introduce players to an ideal 'mentality' associated with winning possession

of the ball and transitioning to attack. The players have numerous opportunities and enhance their technical and tactical defensive performance.

## SET UP

The area is a 20x20 yards square with two small portable goals on opposite lines. Two teams each with 3-4 players in corners in the same side of the area. Each group has a supply of balls. The coach stands in a position to observe and teach players during the activity.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Make the area smaller.

**More Challenging:** Increase numbers to a 2v1 then 3v2 activity, providing the defenders with more decisions to make.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The coach should create an environment providing players with multiple opportunities to develop their understanding of defensive decision making and responsibility. A strong emphasis should be on an immediate recovery to a new role or position, if a defender is beaten - 'beat me twice'.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage defenders to close space fast in front of the attacker with the ball to avoid over committing or diving in. If the attacker has success getting to the line, encourage the defender to immediately prepare to defend again. Teach players to stand up, move their feet and be patient, forcing the attacker to make a mistake.

## NOTES:

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# 4V4 DEFENDING

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Roles of 1st, 2nd and 3rd defenders and transition to defense and attack. *Top 3 competencies:* Individual defending, team defending and communication in defense.

## HOW TO PLAY

4 defenders and a goalkeeper play against 4 attackers. The attacking team starts the game and attempts to score. The defending team attempts to win the ball and distribute to any of their 4 teammates waiting to come on behind the halfway line. If the defending team is successful, the new team enters as the attacking team and the team that was attacking now transitions to defending the goal. If the ball leaves the area, restart with a throw or goal kick and both teams stay on. If a goal is scored, a new attacking team enters and the defenders leave the field. Impose a time or a points objective.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Play 4v4 plus keeper.
2. 4 attackers attempt to score in the goal. The 4 defenders attempt to win possession and must play to a teammate waiting at a station on the other half of the field.
3. The yellow attackers lose possession and the red defender passes to a red target player.
4. On receipt of the pass, a new red team attacks the large goal and the yellow attackers now transition quickly to become defenders.
5. The game progresses and the defending team now have a counter attacking option. The reds win possession and pass to a waiting target player.
6. The yellows must get back and defend and the red team transitions to the attack.

## WHY USE IT

This is a multi-directional fun activity further developing an ideal 'mentality' associated with winning possession of the ball and transitioning to attack in a 4v4 game.

## SET UP

The area is a 45x35 yards rectangle played at one end of a full field. In the main area, two teams of 4 play against each other, with teammates waiting to come on just over the half way line. The ball supply is around the center spot and players restart by collecting a ball. The coach stands on the sideline.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Stop the transition when the goalkeeper makes a save.

**More Challenging:** Allow the keeper to play the ball to the attacking team when a save is made, forcing a new defending team to work harder in transition to get behind the ball.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Create an environment where players can have multiple opportunities to enhance their understanding and success in defending. A strong emphasis must be placed on immediate recovery to a new role or position anticipating that a teammate will be beaten - beat me twice.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players to choose the best option, as first, second or third defender - closing space as fast as possible to avoid over committing, diving in or leaving gaps. Emphasize the importance of immediate transition to defending after losing the ball.

## NOTES:

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# 1V1 TO 1V2 TO TRANSITION 1V1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Role of 1st defender. Role of 2nd defender. Transition to 2nd defender. *Top 3 competencies:* Closing space, recovering behind the ball and angle/distance of support.

## HOW TO PLAY

The game commences with a pass from the 1st defender starting at halfway to the first attacker in line. The defender follows the pass and closes space towards the attacker quickly. On receipt of the pass, the attacker attempts to penetrate on the dribble and beat the approaching defender and enter the other half of the area. A second defender also enters the area when the initial pass is made, but must remain in the back half of the area. If the attacker is able to beat the 1st defender, he/she dribbles into the back half of the area and attempts to beat the 2nd defender to the end line. When beaten, the 1st defender must immediately recover to a cover position in the other area to create a 2v1 in favor of the defenders. If either defender wins the ball, he/she is encouraged to dribble to the opposite end line. The players are awarded points - the defending team win a point each time they can recover the ball and transition over the line and the attackers win a point by dribbling over the end line at the other end. Each team has 3-4 minutes to attack and defend.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. The red defender passes to a yellow attacker and applies immediate pressure as the first defender.
2. The yellow attacker attempts to pass by the 1st defender. A 2nd red defender waits in the back-half of the area for the attacker to penetrate into the half.
3. The attacker beats the first defender and enters into the back half.
4. The 1st defender immediately recovers into the cover position - he/she cannot apply immediate pressure to the attacker when beaten.
5. To progress the yellow attacker must chase back into the front half of the area to defend a counter attack.
6. A red attacker dribbles from the opposite end and attempts to dribble over the opponent's end line.

## WHY USE IT

This is fun activity providing players with opportunities to be a first and second defender. Players will learn how to play and interchange between both roles.

## SET UP

The area is a 25x15 yards rectangle with a line/cones dividing the area in half. 2-3 attacking players start in one corner and in the opposite corner 2-3 defenders wait to enter the area. Adjacent to the halfway line and on the same side as the defenders, 2-3 more defenders start with a large supply of balls. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and instruct.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Narrow the width.

**More Challenging:** Add a transitional element with the attacker transitioning to defense.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Create an environment where players can have multiple opportunities to practice the role as first or second defender. Emphasis must be placed on immediate recovery to a new role/position should a defender be beaten.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players to quickly recover to a cover position. Once recovered, angle and distance of support should be coached to increase the chances of the defenders succeeding in recovery and counter.

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# DEFENDING TRANSITION 4V4V4

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Transition to defense, roles of 1st, 2nd, 3rd defenders. *Top 3 competencies:* Pressing the ball, angle and distance of cover for second defenders around ball.

## HOW TO PLAY

The attacking team attempts to score and the defending teams attempts to win possession and attack the goal at the other end of the field. Both teams must work hard to win possession as long as the ball remains in the same half of the field. However, if the defending team is able to break into the central (neutral) zone, that team continues into the other half as the attacking team and the team waiting now defends. The team previously attacking now prepares to defend when the defending team in the other half are able to counter. Play is continuous. Play 2-3 five minute rounds as workload is heavy on players.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. Activity starts with the white team going to goal.
2. The black team organizes well and prepares to win possession from whites.
3. Blacks win possession
4. The blue team must prepare to defend as the black team enter the neutral zone.
5. The neutral zone is larger.
6. A larger neutral zone gives defenders more time to react to the oncoming attack.

## WHY USE IT

This is a three team transition activity requiring players to maintain focus in a high paced and frequently changing environment. The players must develop a defending mindset including immediate recovery to cover and balance defensive positions to support teammates.

## SET UP

The area is a 60x40 yards rectangle with appropriately sized goals at both ends. There is a large zone 25x40 yards adjacent to each goal and a narrow 10x40 yards zone across the middle. Three teams of 4 players start

with a goalkeeper at each end. Two teams start the game in one half of the field and the other team waits on the other half of the field. The coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls. Commence with normal restarts for balls leaving the field.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Eliminate the neutral zone.

**More Challenging:** Defending team must recover into the neutral zone before they can go and press the ball. Make the zone bigger to provide time to get behind the ball.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** The game allows the team losing possession to win it back quickly. Develop a “beat me twice” mentality encouraging players to take up a new defensive position should an opponent penetrate their line of defense.

**Coaching Tips:** As soon as the ball is lost take up a position as first, second or third defender to put pressure on the attacking team. Coaches should pay particular attention to decisions of ‘balancing’ defenders.

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# DEFENDING 3V4 CLOSE TO GOAL

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Role of a recovering defender, defending with numbers down, technical approach of defenders. *Top 3 competencies:* When and where to press, recovering to support the 1st defender.

## HOW TO PLAY

Play starts with the central defender who passes to any of the four attackers. As the ball is played in, the passing defender must recover to a cover position 'behind the ball' and the other 2 defenders enter the area to apply pressure. The attacking team starts with 1 player entering from each of the cones around the periphery. The attackers attempt to score. If the defending team wins the ball they attempt to penetrate over the line closest to halfway. Alternatively, to increase the tempo of the activity defenders can play to a target or progress to passing to a new attacking player.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 3 defenders v 4 attackers
2. The central blue defender starts the activity with a pass to a white attacker.
3. Three defenders enter the area and must organize quickly to defend 4 attackers.
4. The defender starting the activity must recover to a position behind the ball.
5. The 1st defender applies pressure and the recovering player gets into good support.
6. The blue player wins possession and a new attack begins. All players leave the area and new attackers and defenders sprint onto the field.

## WHY USE IT

This activity can be used as a functional or phase of play activity for a back 3 or 4 and additional midfield players can be added as the complexity increases.

## SET UP

The area is the size of two penalty boxes, approximately 45x40 yards with an appropriate size goal at one end. A goalkeeper starts inside the penalty box and all other players commence in and around the area at the top of

the penalty box. There are four cones marking the starting position for the attacking players and 3 cones marking the starting positions of the defending players. 2 players start at every cone - 8 attackers and 6 defenders. A large supply of balls is placed near the central starting position for a defender. The coach moves around the outside to observe and instruct. The game is played for 3-4 minutes and then change roles.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Add another defender to make numbers even.

**More Challenging:** When the defending team wins possession a new attacking team can enter with a ball to maintain a high tempo.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Teach defenders in the middle and defensive thirds the importance of defensive discipline, to recover positions 'behind the ball' should the opponent penetrate space between/behind defensive lines.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage the recovering defender to move 'deeper' than the ball carrier - instead of a position 'even' with the ball. Instruct the goalkeeper to direct and communicate effectively with the defenders in an effort to organize the defense.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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# DEFENDING TRANSITIONS 5V6 + 2V1

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT COVERED BY ACTIVITY:** Stages 3, 4 & 5: 9-18+ year old players

**DEVELOPMENT THEMES AND COMPETENCIES:** *Top 3 themes:* Transition mind set, penetrate quickly -

dribble, pass, shot and exploit numbers up. *Top 3 competencies:* Passing over short/medium distances, speed dribbling, support movement.

## HOW TO PLAY

One team starts with possession and the other team defends. The first objective is for the attacking team to possess and connect 4 passes. If successful the attackers must seek to pass to the striker at the top of the penalty box. The objective for the defending team is to win possession and penetrate with a dribble/pass over the halfway line. When the ball is passed to the striker, a defender can leave the box and recover to support the other defender to create a 2v1 in favor of the defending team. As soon as play ends the coach plays a second ball to the striker to offer another opportunity for the two defenders to prevent the striker from scoring. Play for 3 minutes - each team defending and countering.

## DIAGRAMS DESCRIPTION

1. 6 blue attackers against 5 white defenders in the midfield area.
2. A striker and defender wait outside the penalty box and a goalkeeper also waits.
3. The blue team combine 4 passes and pass to the striker.
4. The white defenders attempt to win and dribble over halfway for a point.
5. A white defender recovers to support his/her teammate.
6. The white defender must move into a cover position.

## WHY USE IT

This activity provides the coach with an opportunity to teach midfield and back line defenders the 'defensive mindset' as play develops from midfield positions.

## SET UP

The area is 60x40 yards with an appropriate size goal at one end. Use lines or cones to create a 25x40 yards area adjacent to halfway. Two teams 5v4/6v5 in favor of the

attacking team commence in the center box, with balls placed around 3 sides of the area. A second supply of balls is with the coach or an additional player. An additional defender and attacker stand outside the rectangle, positioned at the top of the penalty area. A goalkeeper starts in goal.

## HOW TO MODIFY

**Less Challenging:** Start with fewer numbers and add players gradually.

**More Challenging:** Allow 2 attacking players to support as the pass is made to the striker. Encourage 2 players to recover behind the ball to make it a 2v3 in the last third.

## COACHING NOTES

**Coaching Objectives:** Teach players the importance of transition to defensive roles when the ball is lost in the middle third. Help defenders to recognize how deep they should recover in transition. When the second ball is played by the coach assist players to appreciate who is the 1st and 2nd defender.

**Coaching Tips:** Encourage players to win the ball back in the middle third. If they lose the ball and the opponent plays to the final third, encourage immediate chase to get behind the ball.

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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Playbook & Coaching Benefits // 163  
Coach Newbery's U12 Playbook // 164  
Numbering Systems // 165 - 167  
Formations // 168 - 172

# PLAYBOOK - SYSTEMS, FORMATIONS & NUMBERING

**CONTRIBUTIONS BY: DAVID NEWBERY & IAN BARKER**

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The following is an abstract from two classroom sessions presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles: 4v4 - 7v7 Playbook - Systems, formations and numbering and 9v9 - 11v11 Playbook - Systems, formations and numbering. These were elective sessions, options for individuals seeking to earn a special topics diploma.



A playbook defines predetermined responses worked out ahead of time – in the coach's office, on the practice field or in a team debrief after a game, etc. It is a book containing 'plays', that if executed correctly, should lead to consistently positive outcomes. Playbooks can include systems, process and/or define team's values to shape a consistent response.

The idea of a playbook is not new and is employed in numerous sports including American Football. The focus is on positional excellence, coordination, working in units and executing as a team. Top performing players are regularly celebrated for their dedication, preparation and their in-depth knowledge of the playbook. Essentially, the playbook documents the team's approach - how the

coaches and players plan to attack, defend and address key moments in the game.

Unlike the stop-start nature of American Football, however, soccer has a continuous flow. Play transitions constantly from offense to defense with very little time to organize between restarts. To this end a playbook in soccer benefits players and coaches in a slightly different way, leading to a better understanding of game concepts and ability to visualize patterns occurring during the game. It is unlikely that teammates and opponents will react exactly as conceived in the playbook, but it is hoped that sufficient stimuli will be present to jog-memory and for players to respond to the game-plan positively.



### COACHING BENEFITS

A playbook is just another learning tool – an opportunity to present information in a different way and to address different learning styles. The content of a soccer playbook will differ from coach to coach and will contain developmentally appropriate information. Here are some of the reasons why Coach, David Newbery, develops playbooks for his players, coaches and players' parents:

1. **Helps me organize** – the playbook is an integral tool to assist planning for the season/year. At first, the playbook resembles a portfolio of strategies, plays, formations, activities and curriculum tools, but with some dedication, I can rearrange these pieces into a cogent plan.
2. **Helps players retain and recall information** – coaching 10-11 year old players, there is a great deal of information we attempt to introduce to these young athletes. Whilst continuing to strongly focus on individual technical development, the evolution of the game demands significantly more cognitive intelligence. As small sided game formats progress (4v4, 7v7 and 9v9), the requirement for players to work collaboratively increase exponentially. For example, players are asked to play in 3-4 positions and each position contributes differently to the outcome of the game. A playbook offers another way for coaches to reinforce key concepts without demanding more in-person commitment.
3. **Helps coaches to achieve alignment** – developing the playbook should be an inclusionary process involving the coaching team and players. A more informed assistant coach will be less dependent on the head coach and can take a more active role in coaching, planning and management.
4. **Helps parents to better understand our educational objectives** – often coaches attempt to keep parents at 'arm's length', preferring to retain full ownership for player education. An alternative approach is to encourage parents to participate. A playbook can be a recommended/compulsory study guide with an objective of developing more knowledgeable and informed parents, and parents can be an excellent coaching surrogate, encouraging players to dedicate some time to 'soccer homework.'



### COACH NEWBERY'S U12 PLAYBOOK

The following list provides some content examples included in Coach Newbery's U12 playbook:

- **Playing style:** a critical objective of the playbook is to clearly communicate the intended outcomes, philosophies and 'style' for players and the team.
- **Systems and formations:** a detailed description of how the team will set up on the field and a rationale for why. This section also describes the implications (strengths and challenges) of such a system/s.
- **Team Shape:** during a game the shape of the team in attack and defense may change based on the opponent's strengths and weaknesses, the score and tactical objectives. Identifying and discussing some of the potential scenarios can accelerate learning for all constituents.
- **Functional/positional performance characteristics:** within the chosen system we coach can detail some of the attacking and performance expectations for each position.
- **Set plays:** a collection of diagrams/photographs identifying key personnel and illustrating different options for free kicks, goal kicks, corners, throws etc.
- **Attacking and defending strategies** – tactical concepts we have introduced with the players on the practice field and plan to implement in the game. The specificity and granularity will depend on the sophistication of the coach and ability of players.
- **Team rules and expectations** – player, coach and parent expectations governing behavior and approach.
- **Session plans** – an historical account of activities implemented by the coaching staff to teach and reinforce learning with the players.
- **Identify decision making authority** - no playbook can possibly contain every possibility and permutation. The playbook recognizes the requirement for players to improvise and call many of their own plays. Leaders on the field must receive training to call an 'audible' – a discretionary call made by the players in an ever-changing environment.
- **Player analysis** – the playbook is a 'working' document with new information added during the season. Player self-analysis using video was one innovation that greatly enhanced our player's retention of information and recall. Using 'Focus' software to highlight individual contributions or team tactics, players soon became active participants in the development of new strategies and approaches to meet individual and team strengths. We engaged players in designing future plays, using their first-hand experience to create and support meaningful change. In this way, the playbook facilitates judgment, values and culture.



## NUMBERING

In the days before 'squad' numbering, shirts numbers 1-11 not only represented the starting line-up but also a specific role on the team. Modern coaching methodology reintroduces the traditional numbering system to teach players the performance expectations, systems and positions. Introduced at the formative stages of development, players will quickly learn attacking and defending requirements that will aid in the transition through small sided games (4v4, 7v7, 9v9) to 11v11.

Traditionally, starting players on both teams playing an 11v11 game would wear numbers 1-11 and substitutes 12, 14 and 15. Commercialization of the game in the past 15-20 years at the professional club and international levels adopted a 'squad' numbering system with each player in a squad of 22+ selecting a different number.

Although it is highly unlikely that we will ever revert back to numbers 1-11, there are learning benefits for players to correlate traditional numbers to roles and responsibilities associated with positions on the field.

We can start to introduce young players participating in 4v4 to the numbering system. Our young players will not play just one position and it is important for them to learn to play multiple positions. The more informed and versatile the player, the more value they will have to offer the team. Here is a brief description of all eleven positions (11 aside game).

Coaches working with players participating in small sided game formats will need to select four (4v4) seven (7v7) and nine (9v9) of these positions to meet the challenges of the specific game format.



The following positional descriptions were included in Coach Newbery's Playbook to support a 1-4-5-1 system (diagram below). Coaches can adapt the role descriptions and formation to better represent their preferred style.

### #1 GOALKEEPER

The last line of defense. The goalkeeper position is like no other on the field and requires a completely unique set of attributes. The keeper is responsible for handling and serving the ball with hands and feet, to make saves, collect crosses and command the penalty box with confidence. The keeper sees the entire field and is in a perfect position to organize and direct the team using verbal commands. On receipt of the ball, the keeper must be alert and is a critical participant in the teams offensive strategies. The keeper must remain poised, make good distribution decisions, dictate the playing tempo and relieve pressure when in possession of the ball.

### #2 RIGHT FULLBACK & #3 LEFT FULLBACK

Over the past 10 years the fullback positions have transitioned from being a permanent defensive role to major attacking positions on the team. When the keeper has possession the fullbacks must both spread wide and into a position to receive a throw or ground pass. When in possession the fullback must seek to penetrate the opponent's offensive and midfield lines quickly with 1) a pass or 2) a dribble. As play develops down one side of the field the other fullback should 'tuck in' to the center

of the field and be prepared to provide attacking width if the ball shifts into central positions. There is a fine line between supporting the attack and over committing to the attack so the team is exposed if a turnover occurs. A deep starting position when attacking is an advantage for the fullbacks as the opponents will often fail to consider the fullback a threat. Defending is the first priority and when the opponent wins possession the fullbacks must recover quickly and slide into the defensive line with the central defender. In a 1-3-2-1 formation (7v7 format), the left and right fullback positions provide the team with width and as such the players must work hard to support the striker and midfield players high up the field.

### #4 & #5 CENTRAL DEFENDERS

Moving back and forth between the penalty spot to the halfway line and dominating the opponent's strikers in the center of the field is the central defender's responsibility. Rarely should central defenders operate in wide positions. A young central defender must learn to resist the temptation to win every challenge, but instead maintaining a barrier in front of the goalkeeper. The central defender should force the striker away from goal and must maintain the dominant position in the center of the field. Patience is a virtue for a central defender and good defenders rarely have to make last ditch tackles - realizing it is a better strategy to work hard to stop the striker from facing the goal in shooting range. In our 1-3-2-1 (7v7 format) formation we play with one central defender

(#5). When the team attacks, the central defender must step forward to the halfway line and close space between the 'lines' of the team. The central defender is the anchor and must be the deepest lying player other than the keeper. The central defender provides the attack with deep lying support and an outlet when we need to 'recycle' the ball and keep possession.

### #6 CENTRAL MIDFIELD (DEFENSIVE)

To accommodate marauding fullbacks in the modern game a pivotal role has emerged - the defensive central midfield (DCF) player/s. Defensively the DCF acts as a screen just in front of the central defender to prevent the opponents from passing to the striker in central positions. The DCF player is typically the next deepest lying player after the central defender and this allows the fullbacks to get forward and support wide without being overly concerned about leaving the central defender exposed. In an attacking role, the two central midfield players will form a triangle with the person in possession of the ball, with the DCF player playing deeper. As play moves into the attacking end of the field, the DCF must move in a support position 5-10 yards behind the Attacking Central Midfield (ACF). DCF players must find space to receive the ball and keep the passing tempo high - moving the ball out to the fullbacks, switching play and passing between the seams of the defense.

Similar to the central defenders, the DCF players should dominate the middle and must avoid getting drawn out in wide positions. The DCF is a 'destroyer' - breaking up the rhythm of opponent's attack and winning tackles against the opposing creative midfield players. The importance of the DCF player must not be underestimated and is invariably responsible for providing the platform for attacking and defending success.

### #8 & #10 CENTRAL MIDFIELD (ATTACKING)

Depending on the system employed by the coach, there could be 1 Defensive Central Midfield (#6) and 2 Attacking Central Midfield players. Often referred to as the 'creative' positions on the field, the Attacking Central Midfield Players (ACF) are responsible for linking up with the Striker to create goal scoring opportunities. A feature of this role is speed of thought and speed of play, including quick one-two touch combinations in crowded spaces close to the opponents goal. The ACF must be a goal threat, with an aptitude to beat defenders on the

dribble and releasing shots on target in and around the penalty box. Defensively the ACF must slide into the midfield lines as quickly as possible and make recovery runs to the center of the field. In our 1-3-2-1 system (7v7 format) the ACF must stay connected with the DCF defensively and attacking - forming a triangle with the DCF and the teammate on the ball.

### #7 RIGHT WING & #11 LEFT WING

It is now commonplace to find a right footed player playing left midfield and a left footed player playing on the right. The theory supports the belief a right footed player can cut inside and shoot from the left. This tactic is a departure from the traditional role of a winger, whereby the player attempts to beat the fullbacks into deep wide areas and cross for the strikers. Either way, the #7 and #11 positions are reserved for quick, skilful and explosive dribblers, extremely proficient in 1v1 situations against a defender. Depending on how the team is set up behind the #7/#11, the winger maybe the only wide player and unlike the attacking fullbacks he/she must start in higher attacking positions. It is more likely the #7 and #11 would be used in an 11v11 format. Defensively #7 and #11 will be required to participate in the first line of defence and attempt to track back against the opponent's attacking fullbacks.

### #9 STRIKER

The focal point of the attack, the Striker plays a good portion of the game facing his/her own goal. To this end, the attributes to be a successful Striker are in many ways as unique as a Goalkeeper. Often a solitary figure on the front line, the Striker must be strong in possession and 'hold-up' the ball until support arrives from the midfield or fullbacks. The Striker will regularly be outnumbered as most teams will play with a numerical advantage in defense, so buying time for reinforcements to arrive is a necessity. Instead of attempting to beat defenders by dribbling, a competent Striker will time movement into spaces to create 1v1 situations and avoid a double team. With quick support and help of an Attacking Midfield player, the pair will try and penetrate the center of the defense and unbalance less mobile central defenders. As one striker is poorly matched against 3-4 defenders, the Striker is usually employed defensively to prevent passes back to the goalkeeper/central defenders once the initial pass has been made wide.



## FORMATIONS & NUMBERING - 4V4

Below are four 4v4 formations. Attendees of the convention classroom session will participate in a planning activity to first select an 11v11 formation that best represents a coach's preferred system. Working back through small sided game formats, the coach is asked to select one 9v9, 7v7 and 4v4 formation that best supports the chosen 11v11 formation. Under each diagram write notes to support the selections and on the diagrams write numbers above players to identify positions.



**4V4: 0-1-3 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**4V4: 0-2-2 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**4V4: 0-1-2-1 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**4V4: 0-3-1 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## FORMATIONS & NUMBERING - 7V7

Below are four 7v7 formations. Attendees of the convention classroom session will participate in a planning activity to first select an 11v11 formation that best represents a coach's preferred system. Working back through small sided game formats, the coach is asked to select one 9v9, 7v7 and 4v4 formation that best supports the chosen 11v11 formation. Under each diagram write notes to support the selections and on the diagrams write numbers above players to identify positions.



**7V7: 1-1-4-1 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**7V7: 1-2-1-3 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**7V7: 1-3-1-2 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**7V7: 1-3-2-1 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## FORMATIONS & NUMBERING - 9v9

Below are four 9v9 formations. Attendees of the convention classroom session will participate in a planning activity to first select an 11v11 formation that best represents a coach's preferred system. Working back through small sided game formats, the coach is asked to select one 9v9, 7v7 and 4v4 formation that best supports the chosen 11v11 formation. Under each diagram write notes to support the selections and on the diagrams write numbers above players to identify positions.



**9V9: 1-2-3-3 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**9V9: 1-2-4-2 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**9V9: 1-3-4-1 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**9V9: 1-4-3-1 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## FORMATIONS & NUMBERING - 11V11

Below are four 11v11 formations. Attendees of the convention classroom session will participate in a planning activity to first select an 11v11 formation that best represents a coach's preferred system. Working back through small sided game formats, the coach is asked to select one 9v9, 7v7 and 4v4 formation that best supports the chosen 11v11 formation. Under each diagram write notes to support the selections and on the diagrams write numbers above players to identify positions.



**11V11: 1-3-5-2 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**11V11: 1-4-3-3 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**11V11: 1-4-4-2 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**11V11: 1-4-5-1 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## FORMATIONS & NUMBERING - YOU DECIDE!

Below are four blank canvases for you to draw your favorite formations for 4v4, 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11.



**YOUR FAVORITE 4V4 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**YOUR FAVORITE 7V7 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**YOUR FAVORITE 9V9 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**YOUR FAVORITE 11V11 FORMATION:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Create & Deny Space // 174

Principles of Play & Game Concepts // 175

A New Conceptual Framework // 176

Creating Activities Focused on  
Defending & Attacking // 177



# ATTACKING & DEFENDING PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

CONTRIBUTIONS BY: TOM PARRY

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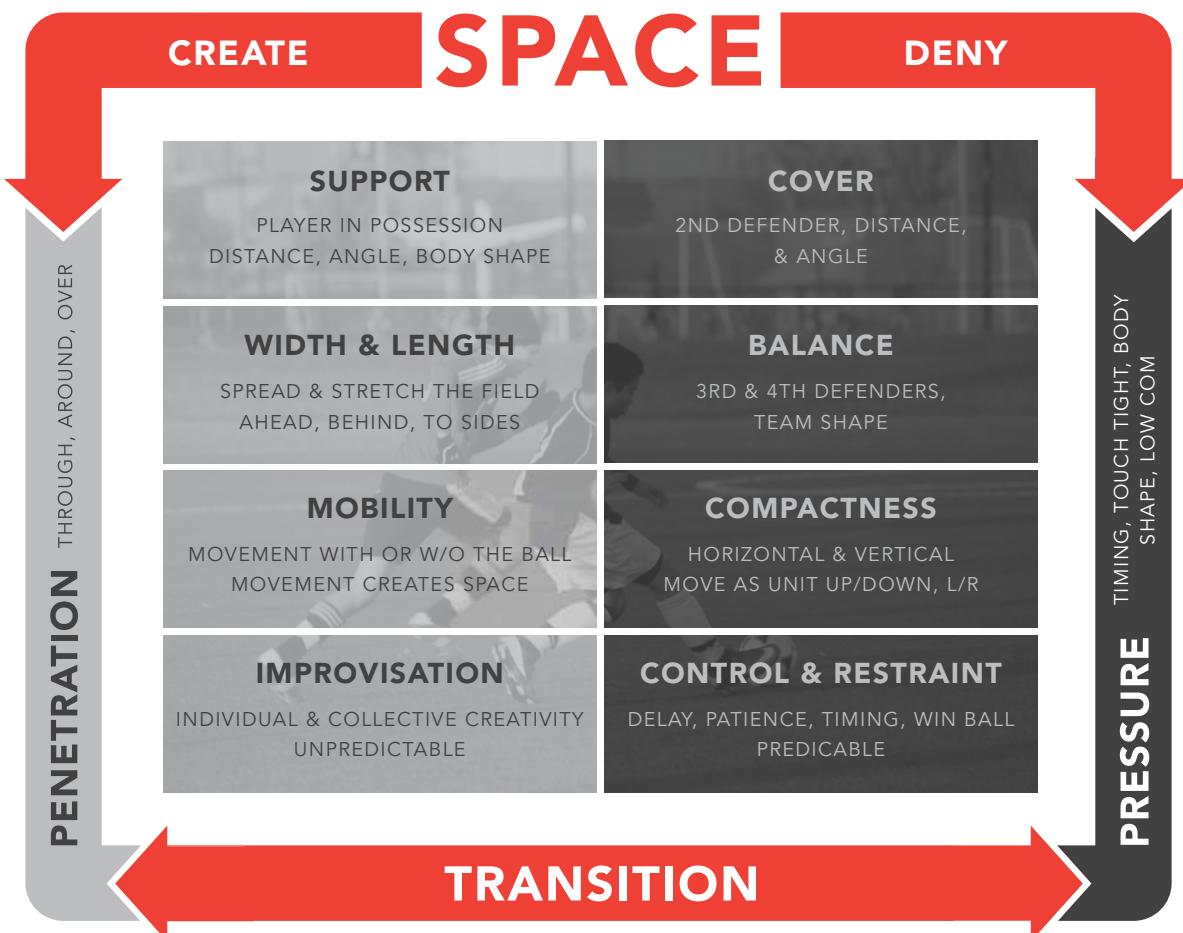
The following is an abstract from the Attacking and Defending Principles of Play classroom session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. This session was an elective session, an option for individuals seeking to earn a special topics diploma.

Coaches regularly introduce new activities to their teams in order to keep practice fresh, players engaged and in an attempt to enhance player understanding. Unfortunately though, if activities do not have a conceptual focus, these practices do not always translate to improved game performance. US Soccer's principles of play can be very beneficial in addressing player understanding, as they are the building blocks of soccer performance. What is alarming is that many players do not have a clear understanding of the principles of play, which in turn makes it very difficult for them to apply them effectively in a game situation.

Attacking and defensive principles of play are an integral part of coaching in the US Soccer education system. A major benefit of using the principles of play as a framework for coaching, is that practices can be focused around a central concept so players begin to understand the 5 W's of who, what, where, when and why. Thus, as players progress through the age groups, a deeper understanding of the game can be developed, ultimately enhancing the top levels of US soccer. At the top level,

every player is strong, fast and skilled, therefore a greater conceptual understanding and ability to apply the principles of play is what often determines players who excel and those who do not.

When coaching, using the principles of play as a framework can significantly enhance player understanding, but must be presented in a format that clearly demonstrates how they are related to one another. Currently, in the US Soccer literature, the principles of play are presented in pyramid format, as two separate documents (attacking and defending), with the principles simply listed at the bottom of the pyramid. Although, this may demonstrate that the principles are the foundational elements supporting the strategy, system and style of play implemented, it provides little insight into how the principles are organized from an attacking or defensive standpoint. The current format also does not provide any inclination as to how attacking and defending principles interact with each other. This is fundamental to understanding all aspects of the game, including the transition from attack to defense and vice versa.





## PRINCIPLES OF PLAY & GAME CONCEPTS

In other fields, such as physical education, principles of play have been historically termed "game concepts". Soccer is considered an invasion game, a game category that also includes basketball, lacrosse, field hockey and rugby, to name a few. This means that these sports have very similar game concepts that can be utilized in order to be successful. In these sports, participants are trying to invade the opposition's territory to score goals or points, and therefore implement game concepts to try and execute this task in the most efficient and effective way possible (Almond, 1986).

In the research literature related to sport coaching and physical education, teaching through game concepts has been used to increase students' cognitive understanding and demonstrate a deeper understanding through application in a game setting (Griffin & Butler, 2005; Mitchell, Oslin & Griffin,

2006; Stoltz & Pill, 2014). A push to have students and athletes gain a greater understanding of game concepts and how they are applied in certain contexts has been around a long time under the curriculum model Teaching Games for Understanding (TGfU) and more recently Game Sense (Bunker & Thorpe, 1986; Light, 2006). These approaches grew out of frustration from traditional models of sport instruction, where technical proficiency was the main focus. What researchers found was that although players were competent technically, they were unable to apply the skills appropriately in the game. This problem has been attributed to the fact that players had limited tactical knowledge and didn't understand the fundamental concepts of the game. The inability to utilize concepts such as space, width and compactness effectively, leads to poor game decisions and therefore performance (Light, 2004).



# PRINCIPLES OF PLAY - A NEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

So, if we have identified that players lack the knowledge and/or understanding of the principles of play, how do we resolve it? Redesigning them into a framework that can be shared with players, showing their interaction with one another, and therefore developing a broader understanding of the game can answer this question. Players must understand what the principles of play are and how they relate to one another within (attacking or defending) and across (attacking vs. defending) phases of play. Ultimately, the principles of play should be formatted to show how space is used, created and denied within all aspects of the game.

The conceptual framework presents both attacking and defensive principles of play in the same diagram to allow players and coaches to see the relationship between principles within and across phases of play (attacking and defending). Below is a breakdown of the principles within this new framework.

## SPACE

In an attempt to present the principles in a player friendly format, "Space" is used as the central concept. Ultimately, soccer performance is built upon the creation or denial of space, with the principles of play providing methods to achieve these objectives. In practice, space should be continually discussed, as it is central to the application of the principles. For example, the function of "width (& length)" is to create space to facilitate penetration, whereas, the function of "compactness" is to deny space, and therefore provide pressure when necessary to counteract penetration.

## ATTACKING PRINCIPLES

When in possession, the ultimate goal is to penetrate the defense and score. To maintain possession, support must be provided to the player in possession to counteract the application of defensive principles, such as pressure and cover. Providing width and length makes the field big, again creating space to facilitate penetration. Finally, mobility and improvisation are dynamic in nature and therefore can cause the defense to shift or will draw defenders, creating gaps (space) allowing for penetration. This demonstrates how the attacking principles are

connected to each other but also how they are all related to the concept of creating space.

## DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLES

When not in possession, the objective is to minimize the opportunities of the attacking team to achieve their goal of penetration. The main principle here is pressure, as without pressure the goal of penetration (through, around or over) is much easier to achieve. However, pressure alone does not work, so must be combined with the other principles of cover, balance, compactness and control & restraint. For example, if pressure is applied to the ball, cover and balance must then be utilized to deny the space available and prevent switching the point of the attack, passing lanes and penetration.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is hoped that this revised framework will provide a tool for coaches to openly discuss the principles of play with their players and allow them to more easily discuss how they are related to one another in game play. A couple of examples I have used with my teams is to discuss the relationship between attacking and defensive principles, by asking players what their opponents' objective is and how we can counteract it. This way they are seeing the relationship and engaging in problem solving using the framework as a tool to improve their tactical understanding.

Another example is creating activities that focus on both an attacking AND defensive principle. It is common to only focus on one principle during practice, for example, compactness, and not discuss the opposing principle at all. If your team applies attacking principles against a team who doesn't demonstrate any defensive principles, they will more than likely win. However, how do they perform against a team that does implement defensive principles? We can prepare for this scenario, often encountered in higher profile games, by pitting principles (attack and defense) against each other so they have to problem solve within the activity. This makes the activities much more competitive and authentic, which ultimately will translate into enhanced game performance.



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**Player & Team Performance // 179**

**How Analysis is Utilized // 179**

**Information Retention // 180**

**Coaching Behavior // 181**

# INTEGRATING ANALYSIS TO ENHANCE PLAYER & TEAM PERFORMANCE

**CONTRIBUTIONS BY: IAN DONNELLY**

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The following is an abstract from the Integrating Analysis to Enhance Player and Team Performance classroom session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. This session was an elective session, an option for individuals seeking to earn a special topics diploma.

Performance analysis is now widely recognised as having a crucial role in the development process of individual players and teams. A growing number of coaches now fully integrate analysis into their coaching programs to accelerate learning and maximize development.

As coaches we base our decision making and just as importantly the feedback that we provide to our players, on our perception of what has happened during a game or practice session. However, it is now generally accepted that there are very real limitations in our ability as humans to observe effectively, particularly within complex environments such as a soccer game. This problem is further compounded by our ability to store and then accurately recall large amounts of information, a limitation of our memory.

The reality is that our ability to observe effectively is limited and our ability to process, store and recall information accurately is error-prone. The bottom line is that we put way too much trust in what we think we see and remember – and this clearly has significant implications for coaches. Analysis therefore plays a pivotal role in the coaching process as it can help provide us with the more complete and accurate understanding of performance that is so important. The term 'analysis' is used to refer to video analysis and data (statistical) analysis. Visual feedback is part of the analysis 'mix' as feedback plays a crucial role in the development process.



### WORKING DEFINITIONS

**Analysis** is the process of breaking a complex topic or substance into smaller parts in order to gain a better understanding of it.

**Feedback** can be described as information provided regarding aspects of performance or understanding.

**Statistics** is the study of the collection, analysis, interpretation, and organization of data.

The more we learn about how we acquire and develop skill, the more we recognise the decisive role that feedback plays. It is now generally accepted that the quality of feedback we provide for our players has a significant impact on the extent and speed of learning. As coaches we should therefore be constantly striving to provide the highest quality of feedback for our players.

## HOW ANALYSIS IS BEING UTILIZED BY COACHES:



to provide crucial visual feedback



to analyze individual and team performance



to analyze opposition



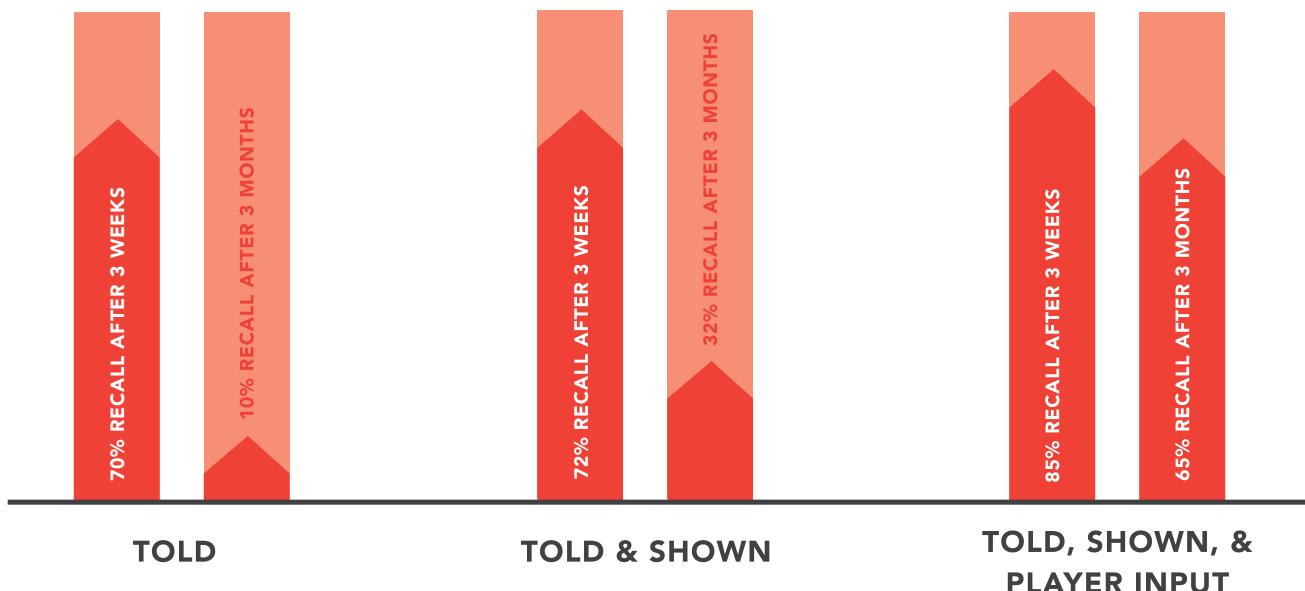
in the recruitment and/or selection of players



to enhance our understanding of the game



## INFORMATION RETENTION & LEARNING



Traditionally, video analysis has been a 'Coach-driven' process in which the coach/coaching staff analyze a performance and then feedback to their players on an individual, unit or team basis. The convention session provides examples of how analysis is being effectively integrated at different levels of the game from Professional clubs and College Programs to Academies, Clubs and Grassroots.

The session also explored how a growing number of coaches are embracing video analysis and cloud technology in using a 'Player-driven' approach to analysis, to enhance performance and accelerate learning through the creation of a range of new learning opportunities for their players.

Our role as coaches is to facilitate learning and maximize the potential of our players. It is now widely accepted that the most effective way to ensure that information is retained by our players is to fully engage them in the learning process.

During the convention presentation examples are provided to illustrate how coaches are utilizing 'Focus' video analysis technology and online video sharing capability for a 'player-driven' approach to analysis. Presenters share the processes that they have created to fully engage players in their own development and how coaches are utilizing these opportunities to significantly enhance individual and team performance.



## INTEGRATING ANALYSIS TO ENHANCE COACHING BEHAVIOR

The following is an abstract from the Integrating Analysis to Enhance Coaching Behavior classroom session presented at NSCAA 2017 Convention in Los Angeles. This session was an elective session, an option for individuals seeking to earn a special topics diploma.

Coaches strive to find new ways to analyse our players and provide performance feed back to aid learning and maximize their development. Indeed, video analysis is now recognized as having a key role to play in the development process and is increasingly being utilized by coaches at every level of the game, grassroots to professional.

Less common though is the willingness to turn the camera around and focus on coaching behaviour. This is a little surprising, given that coaches clearly play a critical role in the development process. Common sense would suggest that if we therefore invest time and effort in analyzing coaching performance, coaching effectiveness will be improved and standards raised.

The importance of feedback has long been recognised. It is now generally accepted that the quality of feedback that we provide for our players has a significant impact on the extent and speed of learning. Indeed, coaches are therefore constantly striving to provide the highest quality of feedback for their players. Logic therefore

suggests that if we can improve the quality of feedback that can be provided to coaches on key aspects of their performance, the extent and speed of learning will be similarly enhanced.

This session provides examples how coaches, working at different levels of the game ,are utilizing video analysis technology to analyse and improve coaching behaviour, enhance understanding and raising standards.

Examples are provided to illustrate how analysis technology is now being used by National and State Associations in coaching development courses to provide invaluable visual feedback opportunities for coaches.

One area that is often underplayed in coaching development programs is the importance of verbal behaviour. Coaches can have vast amounts of knowledge, experience and content at their disposal, but it is their ability to communicate this effectively to their players that will ultimately determine the extent of learning and their ability to impact on performance.

We also explore key aspects of verbal behaviour and show examples of how the process of analysing what is actually being said can provide coaches with a powerful insight into their own performance.



## VERBAL BEHAVIOR

**DIRECTION OF COMMENTS:** Who are comments being made to?

**NATURE OF COMMENTS:** Is it skill-related or non-skill related?

**FOCUS OF COMMENTS:** What is the purpose of the comment? E.g. An instruction, feedback, etc.

**TIMING OF COMMENTS:** When is the comment being delivered?

**EMPHASIS OF COMMENTS:** Is the comment related to identified coaching points for that session?



## SOUVENIR SOCCER COACHING MANUAL

This one of a kind soccer coaching manual includes 66 full color activity plans and manuscripts summarizing 12 workshop sessions all focused on youth player development. It was developed to supplement 23 practical coaching clinics and theory workshops offered at 2017 National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Convention.

For coaches attending the convention, the manual is a terrific way to remember many of the top-class presentations and outstanding education experiences - a souvenir that can be referenced for years to come. For thousands of coaches around the world unable to visit Los Angeles in January, 2017, this publication also serves as an historical account of the event and one way to participate in the largest gathering of coaches in the world.



### SPECIAL TOPIC DIPLOMAS

The manual includes a review of five Special Topics Diplomas, each with a manuscript summarizing the sessions and 12 activity plans:

1. Futsal Mentor & Youth Coach Diploma
2. Attacking Transition and Counter Attacks Diploma
3. Speed of Play Diploma
4. Advanced Youth Coaching Diploma
5. Technical Training and Small Sided Games Diploma



### CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS

Additionally, the manual includes a manuscript for seven classroom workshops offered as electives, including:

1. Cultivating a Master Coach Mentality
2. "Beat Me Twice" - Bringing the competitive mind-set into individual, group and team defending.
3. 4v4 & 7v7 Playbook - Systems, Formations and Numbering.
4. 9v9 & 11v11 Playbook - Systems, Formations and Numbering.
5. Attacking and Defending Principles of Play.
6. Integrating analysis to enhance player and team performance.
7. Integrating analysis to enhance coaching behavior.