



# **Scottish FA South East Region**

## ***Player Development Programme***

### **Small-Sided Games Coaches Resource Booklet**

#### **Phase 2 : 7v7 Learning To Play**

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## Introduction

### Scottish FA's Long Term Player Development Plan (LTPD)

The game of football is a fast, skilful and complex game and is defined as an invasive game which allows players to move freely about the pitch. Therefore, by its very nature, football is played in a constantly changing environment which requires players to make numerous decisions whilst trying to deal with the ball, physical contact and cope with the many physical rigours of the game.

The parent game (11-a-side) is an adult game, designed by adults on an adult sized pitch with adult goals and ball. The complexity of the parent game has, for many years, been recognised throughout the world as being inappropriate for the young developing player and Scotland has led the way in the use of the small sided game over the last 20 years. Throughout this period a variety of formats have evolved which has led to confusion and duplication in the youth game.

With the launch of the Scottish FA's *Developing Talent Plan* it would seem appropriate that a national player pathway template is devised which gives a common delivery framework that all affiliated bodies and local authorities can work to. The Developing Talent Plan is a player centred approach that aligns technical and tactical development with the physical development of young players. The plan also includes the promotion of mental, social and lifestyle qualities which underpin the development of young players at every stage of their playing journey. This player centred approach emphasises the role of quality training programmes, together with the appropriate competitions structure which is correct for the age and stage of the player. The process is over a long term and is focussed on performance rather than the short term "peaking for the weekend" approach with its win at all costs mentality. Children and young players will always want to play a game and want to win in any game format and this needs to be fostered and encouraged. However, the role of practice and preparing to win needs to be addressed with varying emphasis at the different stages. Therefore, the proposed Player Pathway will:

- *Support player development*
- *Reflect the principles of the Scottish FA Developing Talent Plan*
- *Maximise the opportunity for playing but not to the detriment of practice*
- *Avoid duplication in a player's competitive schedule*
- *Define clearly the appropriate game format to match ages and stages of development*
- *Provide structured opportunities for both the identification and development of talented young players*
- *Provide a structured player pathway that will allow the gradual introduction of appropriate rules and complexity to the game*
- *Provide a structured player pathway that will allow the gradual introduction at appropriate levels of "need to win" competitions to all level of players*
- *Promote a development culture and long term approach for parents, coaches, players and administrators in the game*

The Scottish FA, in consultation with international player/athlete development expert Istvan Balyi, have developed a phased model of long-term player development. Throughout the consultation exercise, Balyi was clear that competition that focuses on

outcome and not process is highly detrimental to the development of young players. Coaches should gauge success in terms of player progress and not by the results of matches. The Scottish FA has outlined the stages of development as follows:

1. **Desire to Play Phase – age: Males 6-9/ Females 6-8 (4v4)**
2. **Learning to Play phase – age: Males 9-12/Females 8-11 (4v4 + 7v7)**
3. **Developing the Player phase -: Males 12-16/Females 11-15 (7v7 + Transitional 11v11 + 11v11)**
4. **Preparing to Compete – Males 16-18/Females 15 -17 ( 11v11)**
5. **Preparing to Win – Males 18+/ Females 17+ (11v11)**

Each phase of the Developing Talent Programme has an associated game format that is designed to allow the player to develop in a playing environment that is most appropriate to their age and stage of development.

The aims of the Developing Talent Programme are to introduce the football community in Scotland to this model of long term planning in respect of youth development and, consequently, the benefits to be accrued from it. The process emphasises the delivery of programmes that are matched by key criteria relating to individual development. The underpinning philosophy is one that focuses on performance over the long term, rather than promoting winning as a short-term objective.



**The following coaching plan focuses specifically on Phase 2 of the Long Term player Development Pathway:**

Learning to Play – and is aimed at Males 9-12 / Females 8-11

This coaching resource provides a series of warm ups, themed sessions and small sided game practices to assist coaches when planning their training activities.

The content and structure of the activities focus on stage 2 of the LTPD strategy - the "Learning to Play" phase - and has been designed to ensure coaching is kept to a minimum. The practices themselves should provide a challenge to the children however where and when required the coach should extend and support both individually and collectively.

Please note that although not included in this resource it is recommended that dynamic movement/stretchers are incorporated into the warm up and that each session concludes with a cool down phase which incorporates static stretches.

Also supporting this resources is the SFA's Creative Player DVD and Booklet which can be purchased from your regional office on 0131 667 8245.

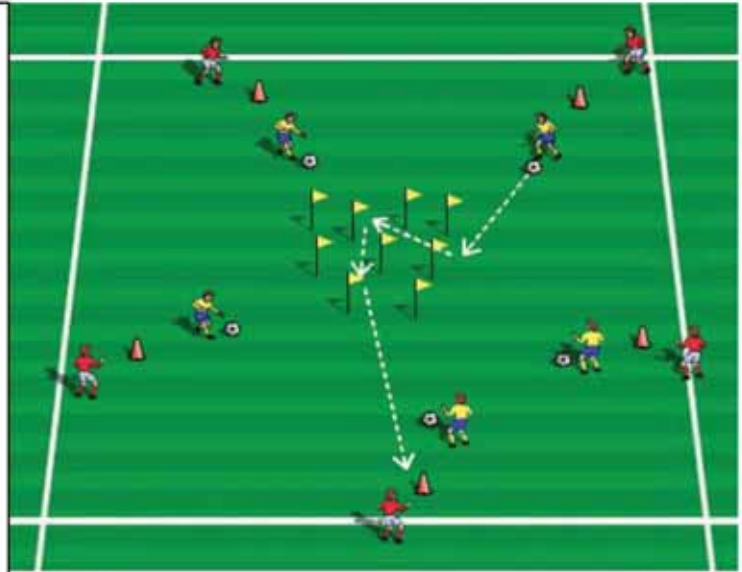
### THEME: Dribbling and Passing Introductory Activities

#### Dribbling -Swedish

**Set Up:** 8 – 10 Flags (or cones) placed in middle area. 5 cones placed on perimeter 10 – 20 steps from flags with 2 -3 players at each cone -1 ball per group.

**Objective:** Players in yellow move with the ball and dribble randomly through the flags avoiding contact with both flags and fellow Players before returning to exchange with Player in red. Progress to exchange with any free outside player.

**Progression:** Pass and lay / Take overs / 1 – 2's and repeat dribble -exchange 2<sup>nd</sup> time around / increase number of balls to increase intensity.



#### Dribbling Gates

**Set Up:** Place a set number of coloured gates randomly around the field. Split into two groups – 1 ball per Player.

**Objective:** Players dribble randomly through the gates. Continuously changing direction increase and reduce intensity on command.

**Progression:** Players dribble through gates in sequence i.e. red to blue to green to yellow / Change sequence / Maximum number of gate in a set time / Introduce 2 – 3 defenders to block off (not tackle) gates.

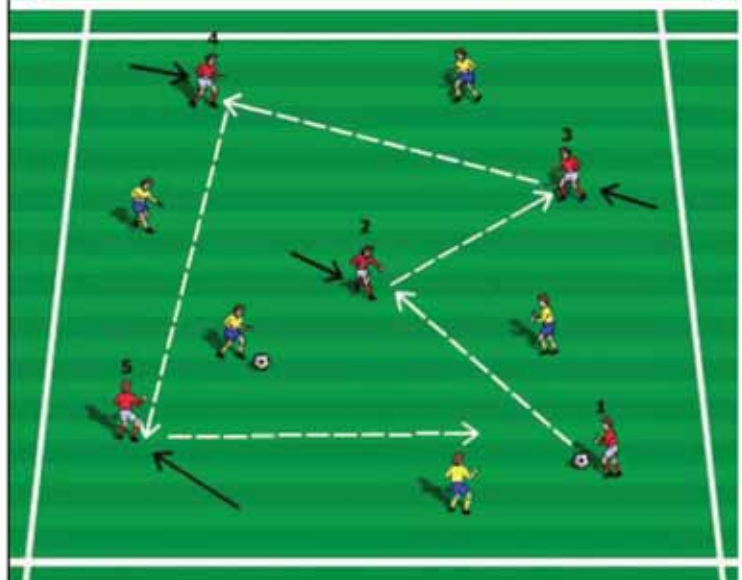


#### Passing in Sequence

**Set Up:** 2 groups of 5 Players within a 30 x 30 area. Number Players 1 to 5 (1 ball per group).

**Objective:** Players 1 passes to Player 2 who passes to Player 3 etc. Last Player in sequence passes back to Player 1 – repeat sequence.

**Progression:** Condition the surface the Player receives and then passes with / Reduce number of touches to increase tempo / Ball must always be passed back to schemer -rotate schemer.



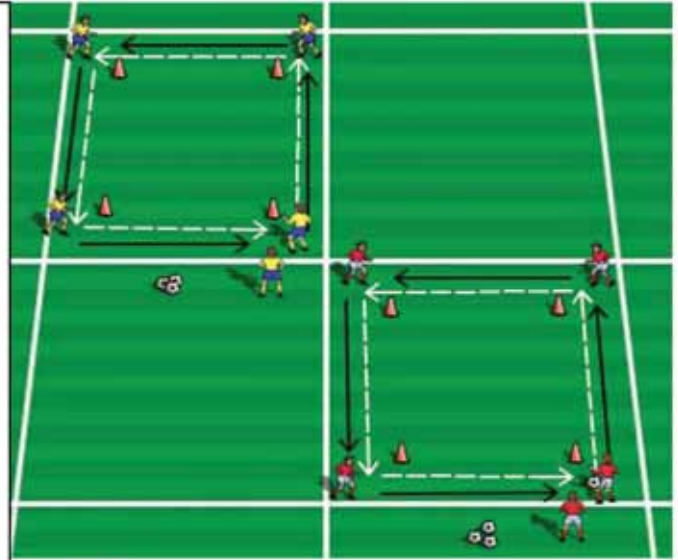
### THEME: Passing & Control Introductory Activities

#### Passing –Ajax

**Set Up:** 2 Boxes 12 – 15 steps square, 1 group per box. 1 Player at each corner 2 or more Player at starting point – ensure supply of footballs.

**Objective:** Players pass around the square and follow pass. Receiving Player moves to receive pass, passing Player supports the pass.

**Progression:** 1 -2's, 1 touch, Speed Passing etc.

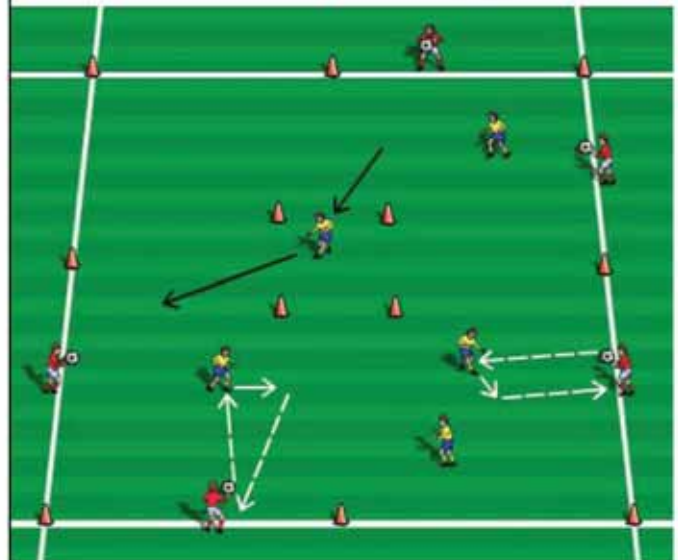


#### Passing/Control Windows

**Set Up:** Large outer box approx 25 x 25 and a smaller inner box approx 5 x 5 – Players split in 2's.

**Objective:** Player 1 takes the ball and stands in a window i.e. between 2 cones. Player 2 receives a pass from partner and moves around the area receiving and returning passes. After set period change

**Progression:** Vary length of pass as well as condition surface. **Note:** This exercise can be used to focus on control, condition to 2 touch and vary controlling surface i.e. thigh control and pass.

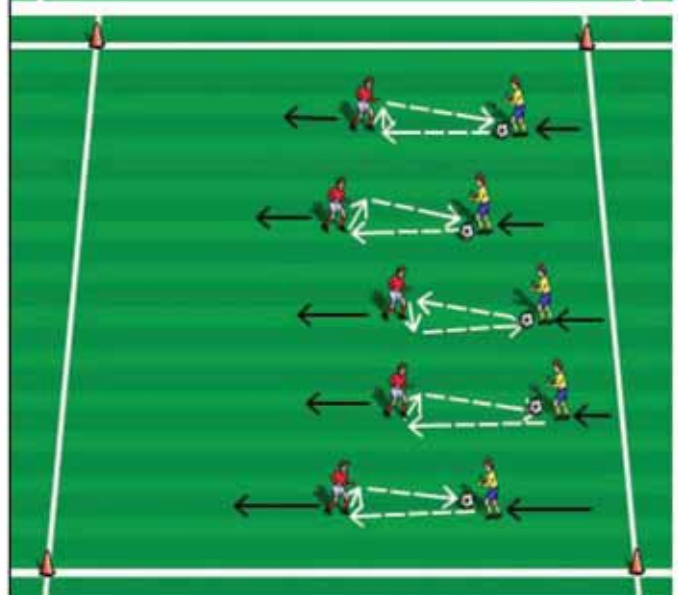


#### Controlling Surfaces

**Set up:** 2 lines of Players one with ball and one without facing.

**Objective:** Players in red move backwards across the field, Yellow Player move in relation and feeds pass for a controlled return i.e. foot, thigh, head, 2 touch etc. Change after set period or distance.

**Progression:** Feeding Players now moving backwards. Feeder alters distance or angle as ball is thrown.



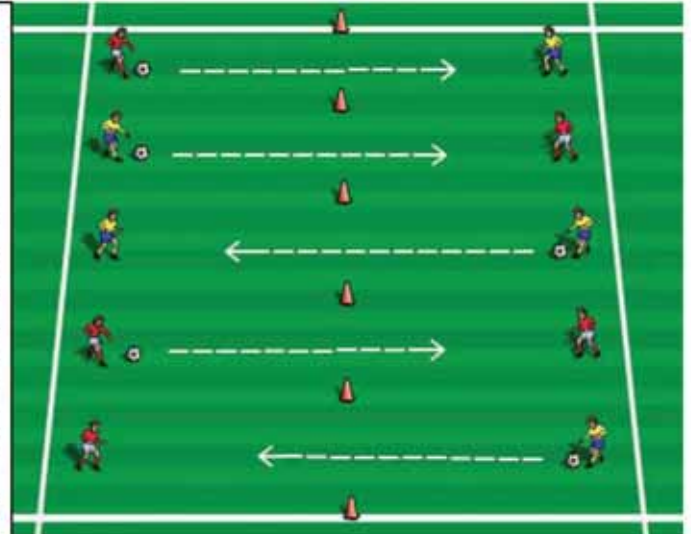
### THEME: Shooting / Heading / GK Introductory Activities

#### Shooting - 2 Sided Goal

**Set Up:** Players in pairs facing each other, cones approx. 6 steps apart in the middle to create a two sided goal.

**Objective:** Players 10 – 12 steps apart control and pass the ball continuously using instep. Progress to gently striking the ball through the goal using the laces back to partner. As technique improves increase distance between the players. Introduce points for scoring and additional points for accuracy i.e. 1 point for scoring through goal, 2 points for scoring through goal with accuracy to find partner.

**Progression:** Introduce GK's. Pair Players up and play 2 v 2 shooting challenge.

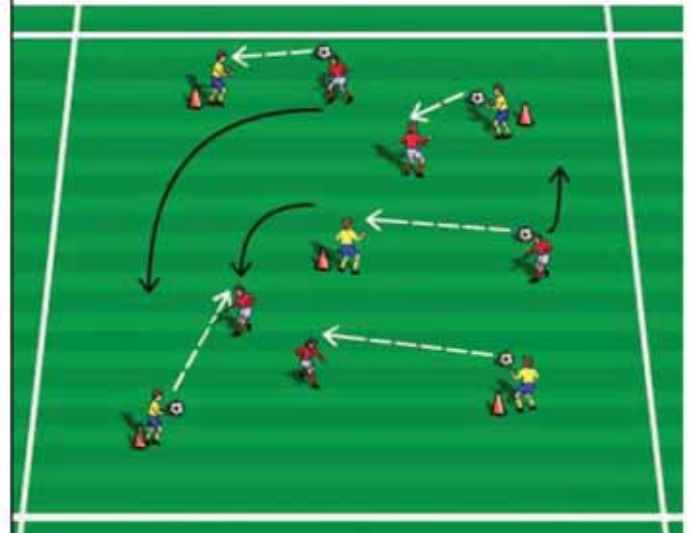


#### Heading on the Move

**Set Up:** Area approx 30 x 25 -two groups one with a ball, one without. Group with ball find a free space. Group without the ball stand 4 to 5 steps away facing their partner.

**Objective:** Players receives a pass/throw and heads the ball back into their partners hands. The Players then moves randomly around the area looking for feeds to return. Players switch places and the practice repeats.

**Progression:** Vary feeds and/or introduce targets to continually challenge Players.

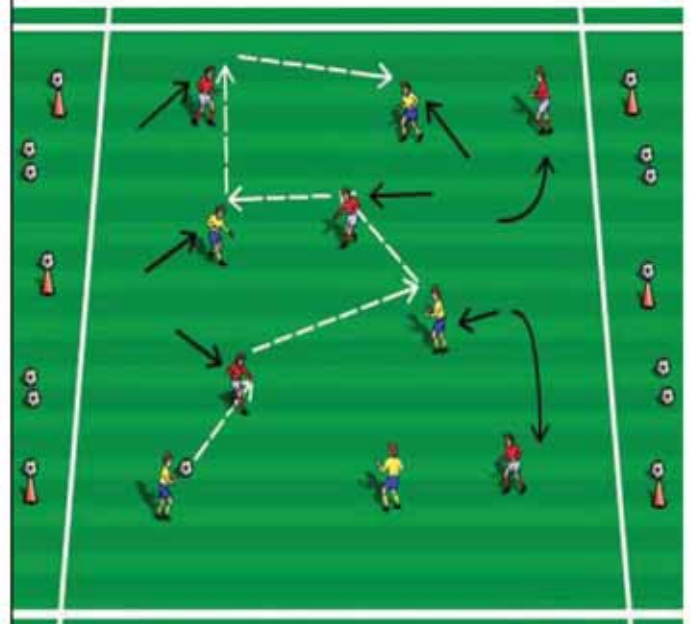


#### Handball in Sequence

**Set up:** Area approx 30 x 25. Two groups 1 ball per group.

**Objective:** Players pass the ball amongst their group using their hands. Introduce various types of throw and catches i.e. under-arm, over-arm throws, overhead catches etc.

**Progression:** 1. Continue with 2 balls however passing must follow sequence red to yellow to red to yellow – rhythm and tempo. 2. Play handball possession. 3. Introduce game where each team score by hitting 3 balls off their bases – directional play.





### THEME: Dribbling

#### Drill

**Set Up:** A course of 8 gates 2 steps wide with 2 target goals behind start line – see diagram opposite. Players form 2 groups.

**Objective:** Players in pairs dribble through the 7 gates randomly before shooting into target goals. Next pair start immediately after the players shoot.

**Variation:** Players call out number of gate as they pass through i.e. 1 to 7. Develop into a team relay. Introduce 2 defenders to randomly block gates forcing players to change direction.

**Technique:** Use inside and outside of front foot to change direction and when keeping the ball close / Use laces to move ball forward on straight runs / Head up / Arms up for balance / change of direction and speed.

#### Development Activity

**Set Up:** Field 36 by 30 for line ball or end zone (1 step deep) as scoring zone. Equal teams however a floating player may be introduced.

**Objective:** Players are encouraged to be creative by driving and taking on opposing players. A goal is scored when a player penetrates the opposition and stops the ball on the end line or zone.

**Variation:** Team that scores retain possession and attack opposite end.

**Technique:** As drill.

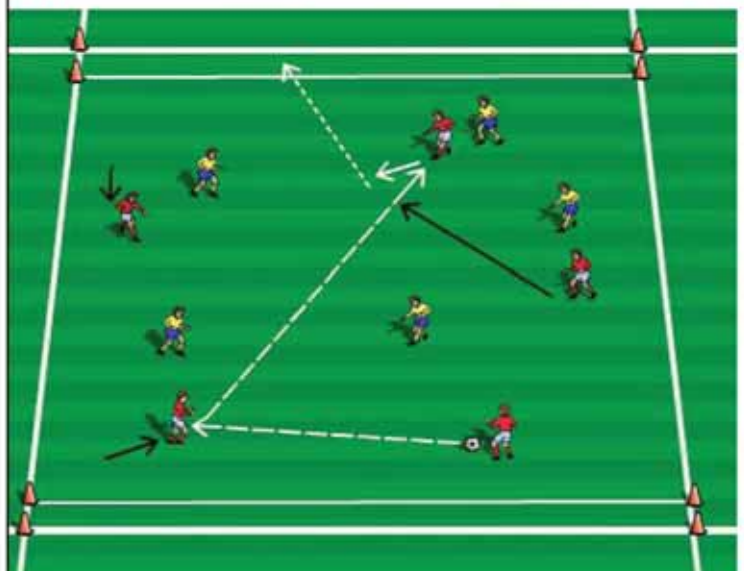
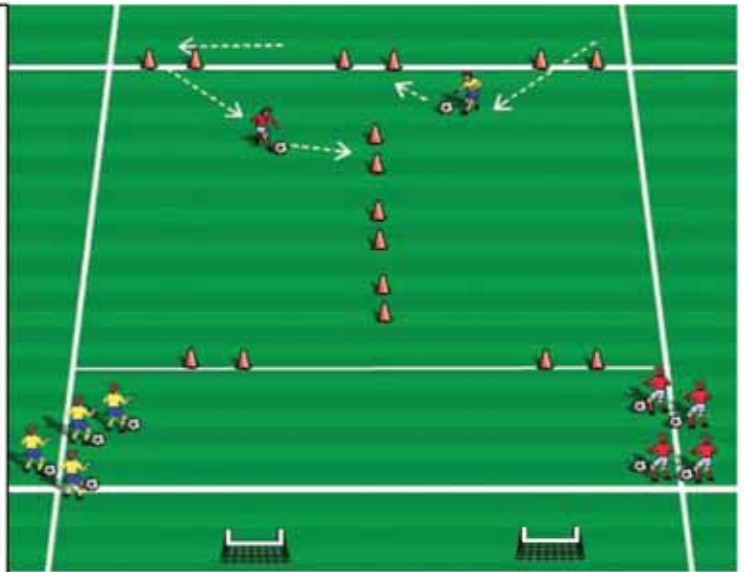
#### Group Play

**Set Up:** Field approx. 36 x 30 is split into 3 zones – equal teams.

**Objective:** GK starts play creating a 2 v 1 or 3 v 2 build up. Players are encouraged to drive the space create 1 v 1's and/or execute 1 – 2's to create goal scoring opportunities.

**Variation:** Dribble forward only! Passes can only be made sideways or back.

FREE PLAY TO FINISH!



### THEME: Control

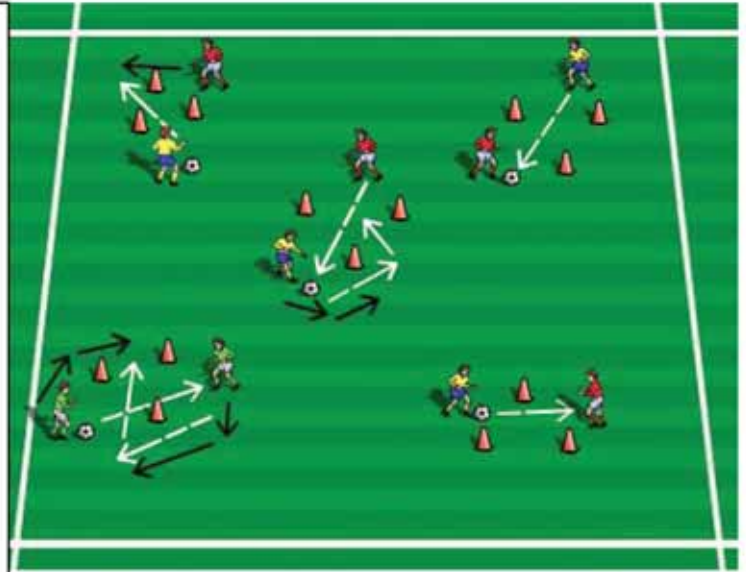
#### Drill

**Set Up:** Form a triangle using markers, 1 step between each marker. Players work in pairs using 1 ball.

**Objective:** Player 1 (red) passes through 2 sides of the triangle to player 2 (yellow) to control and pass through alternative sides back to player 1. Play is continuous.

**Variation:** Limit touches; condition surface for 1<sup>st</sup> touch i.e. inside or outside of foot. Each player starts with 10 points and drops a point when return is incomplete. Change partners regularly and/or up and down ladder.

**Technique:** Get in line with pass / early decision with controlling surface / angle body / 1<sup>st</sup> touch into space / weight and angle of pass.



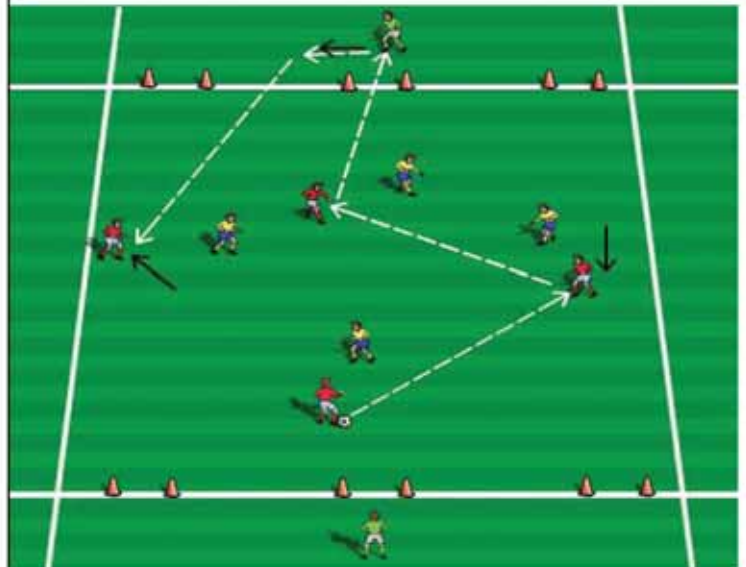
#### Development Activity

**Set Up:** Field approx. 36 x 30 with 3 gates (2 steps wide) at each end. 4 v 4 (or 5 v 5) in middle area, each team has a target player beyond the gates.

**Objective:** A goal is scored when either team passes directly through any of their gates to the target player (green). On reception of the ball the target player takes a touch to the side and restarts the play by passing to the other team.

**Variation:** Team that scores regain possession and look to score at opposite end.

**Technique:** As drill, include 1<sup>st</sup> touch away from pressure in middle area.



#### Group Play

**Set Up:** 3 zones with goalkeepers and 1 – 2 – 1 formation.

**Objective:** Goalkeepers start play to create 2 v 1 in defending 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ball must be played through each zone before a goal can be scored. Goals can be scored quickly on the counter. Unlimited touches to start.

**Variation:** Reduce number of touches. Play can be more direct i.e. miss out middle zone. Players must take 2 touches.



**FREE PLAY TO FINISH!**

### THEME: Short Passing

#### Drill

**Set Up:** An inner box (approx 10 x 10) and an outer box (approx 30 x 30). One Player placed at each cone, 2 to 3 Players placed at cone 1 – see diagram.

**Objective:** Player 1 (red) passes to Player 2 to lay off for Player 3 to complete pass sequence to Player 4. On reception of the ball Player 4 dribbles across to join the back of the yellow group. Players (yellow) repeat down the other side.

**Variation:** Introduce a 2<sup>nd</sup> ball and both sides go simultaneously. Introduce pass from 4 to 1.

**Technique:** Movement to receive / weight and angle of pass / Touch inside of back foot / Open up / follow through on line of intended pass.

#### Development Activity

**Set Up:** Field approx 30 by 20 with 4 v 4 or 5 v 5 in middle, each team has 1 target player off the field.

**Objective:** Short accurate passes to regain possession. Point is scored when accurate pass is played through to target player. **Variation:** Additional points for agreed number (i.e. 6) of successive passes. Team that scores regain possession and look to score at opposite end.

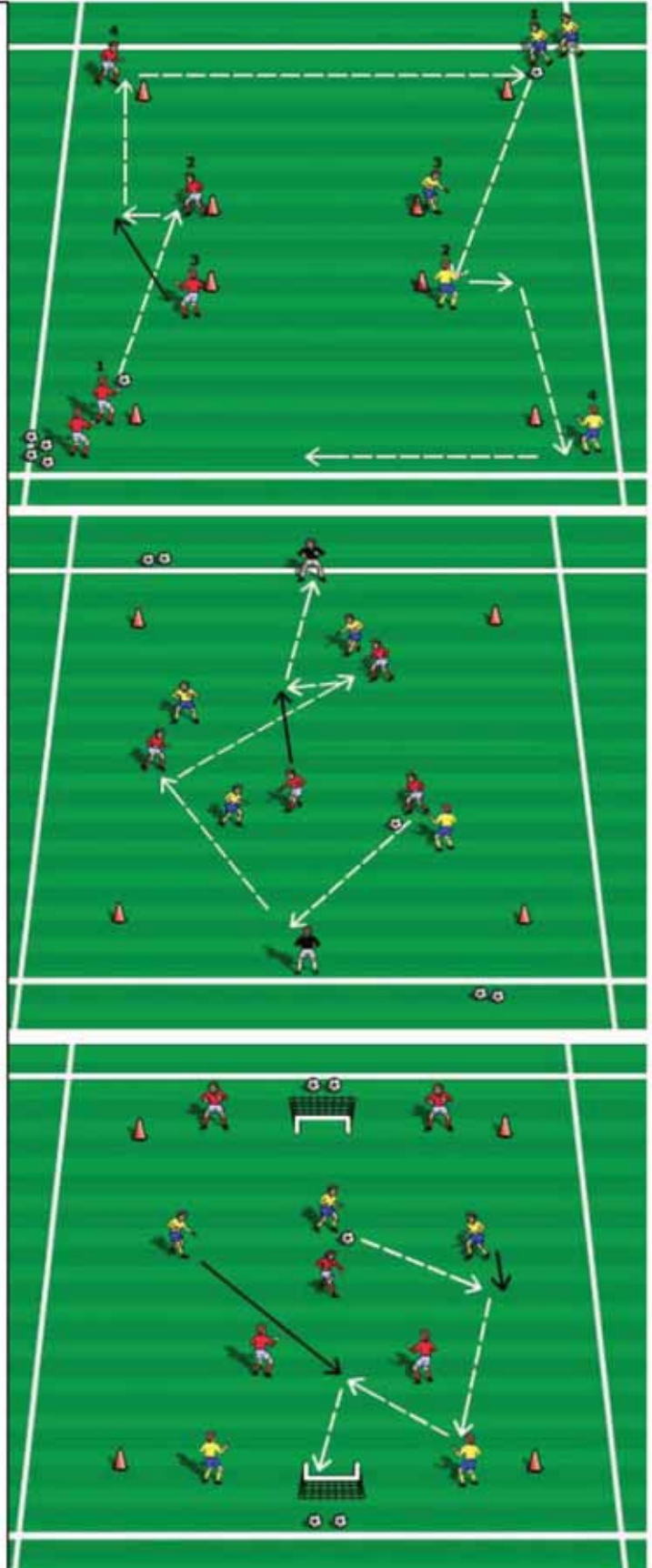
**Technique:** As Drill, also quality of 1<sup>st</sup> touch will set up appropriate pass.

#### Group Play

**Set Up:** Field approx 30 x 20 with Goals (GK'S optional) – equal numbers in middle area with end Players.

**Objective:** Team in possession play sharp accurate passes to create goalscoring opportunities. Attacking team can use end players to create numerical advantage – end players are restricted to 2 touches maximum. **Variation:** Scoring team may retain possession and cannot score until opposing team equalise or a set time has lapsed (e.g. 2 – 3mins). Rotate end players regularly.

FREE PLAY TO FINISH!



### THEME: Long Passing

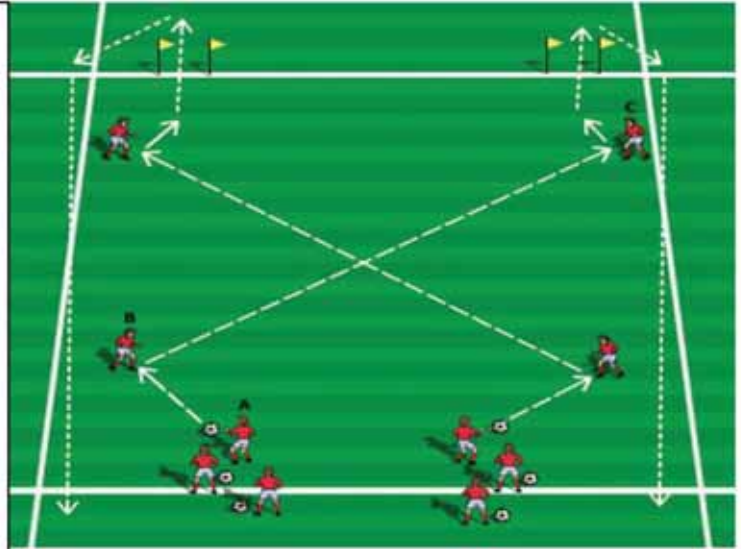
#### Drill

**Set Up:** Area approx 36 long and 30 wide with flags or gates 2 steps wide placed at far end. 8 to 12 players split into 2 groups.

**Objective:** Player A passes short to Player B to control and pass diagonal to Player C to control on the run and drive through gates -Player C casually dribbles ball back to start. Play is repeated from the right side.

**Variation:** Introduce: chipped, driven and curled passes. Player B lays ball off to Player A to play diagonal. Play is synchronised.

**Technique:** Weight and angle of pass / timing and angle of approach / quality of strike / lock ankle / knee over the ball / arms up for balance.



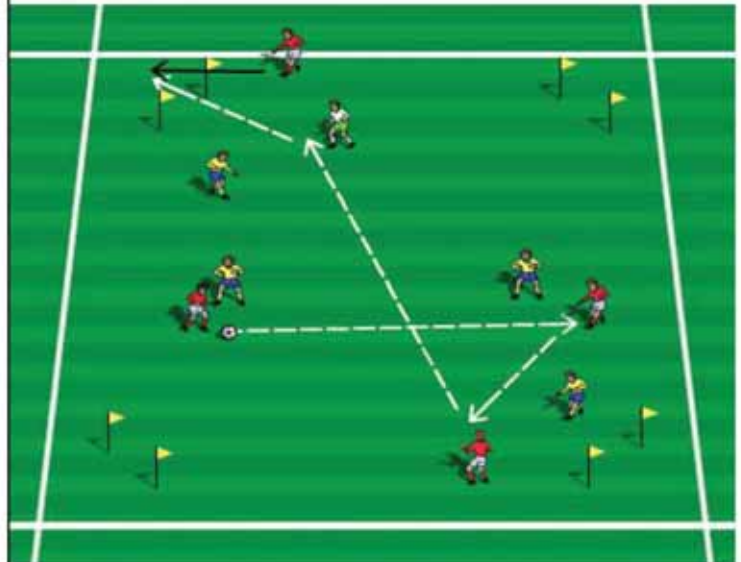
#### Development Activity

**Set Up:** Field approx 36 by 30 with 4 gates (2 steps wide) placed near the corners -equal numbers + floating player in central area.

**Objective:** Play possession football and look for opportunities to switch play. Goals are scored by passing directly through a gate to a teammate who has made a run beyond the gate. Team that scores regain possession. Look for quick switches of play.

**Variation:** When a team scores they are unable to score into the same goal until: they score through another goal or if the opposition score a goal.

**Technique:** As Drill -include timing of pass.

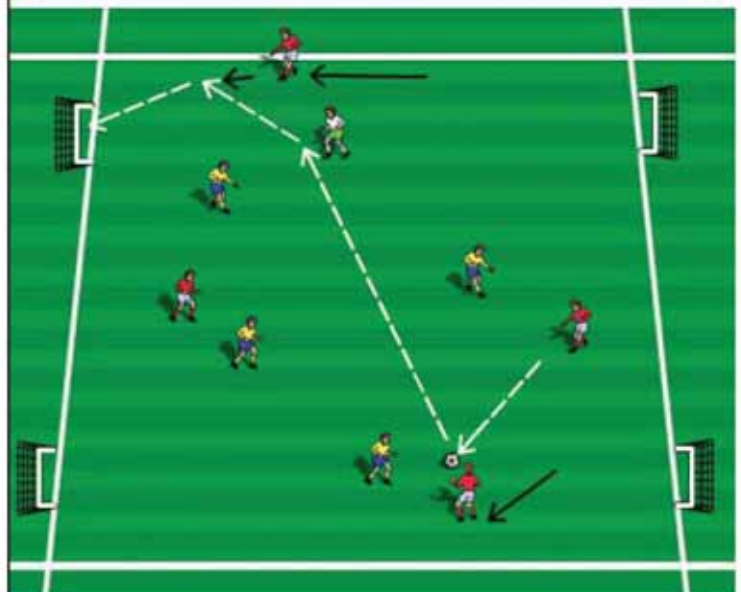


#### Group Play

**Set Up:** 4 goals on a short and wide field. Two teams of 4 v 4 + floating player (or 5 v 5 + floating player) in central area.

**Objective:** Both teams have 2 goals they can score into. Normal rules apply, however players are asked they open out play when the route to 1 goal is blocked. Look to attack swiftly when play is switched.

**Variation:** Double goal if scored directly from a switch of play



FREE PLAY TO FINISH!

### THEME: Shooting

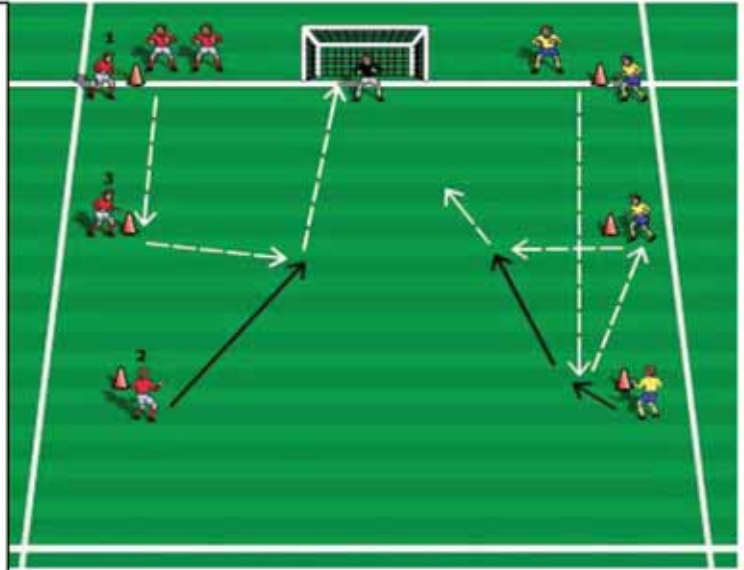
#### Drill

**Set Up:** see diagram opposite. Approx. 8 – 12 steps between the cones.

**Objective:** Player 1 (red) passes short to player 3 who controls and lays a ball into the path of player 2 to shoot at goal. Repeat play from other side. Rotation 1 to 3, 3 to 2, and 2 retrieves the ball and go to 1.

**Variation:** Player 1 (yellow) passes long to player 2 who controls and plays a 1 – 2 with player 3 before shooting at goal. Exercise can be developed to provide varying shooting patterns.

**Technique:** Focus on ball / angle of approach / standing foot / knee over ball / lock ankle / arms up / type of shot will dictate follow through.



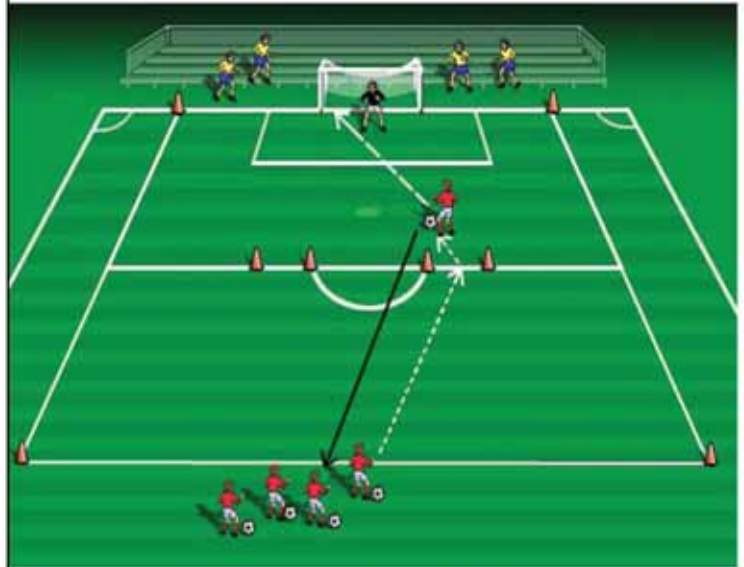
#### Development Activity

**Set Up:** Field approx. 30 to 36 long and 20 to 30 wide, goals at 1 end. 2 teams compete to score the most goals in a set time i.e. 2mins. 1 team shoots and 1 team fields, team then rotate.

**Objective:** Players go 1 at a time, drive across the line and shoot. 2<sup>nd</sup> player goes as soon as previous player has shot, play repeats for set time and/or set number.

**Variation:** Players must drive through a gate before shooting at goal – player can choose gate or coach may nominate right or left.

**Technique:** As drill – power, placement or disguise.



#### Group Play

**Set Up:** Field approx. 36 x 30, 2 v 2, with end players and goalkeepers.

**Objective:** Attacking team build up to create shooting opportunities. End players return passes and/or wayward shots for attacking team to shoot.

**Variation:** Goals can only be scored after playing off an end player.



FREE PLAY TO FINISH!

[www.soccerspecific.com](http://www.soccerspecific.com)

### THEME: Heading

#### Drill

**Set Up:** In an area approx. 20 x 20 each player has a ball in their hands and randomly moves within the area.

**Objective:** Players challenge themselves whilst at the same time gain confidence in heading the ball. From a self feed they head the ball into the air and catch – repeat.

**Variation:** work up the ladder i.e. head once and catch, head twice and catch – repeat exercise up to 10. Place flat markers within the area and use as targets to score.

**Technique:** Focus on ball / knees bent / use forehead / use of arms / timing and positive contact.

#### Development Activity

**Set Up:** Players in pairs find a space and face each other 4 – 6 steps apart, 1 ball per pair.

**Objective:** Players self feed and head to partner to catch and return.

**Variation:** When successful increase distance between players / now sitting repeat previous exercise / ladder 1 to 10 / receive feed from partner and head return.

**Technique:** As drill, increase power i.e. bend at waist and use abdominals.

#### Group Play

**Set Up: Games A** are 1 v 1's – set number of fields 10 x 4 (with ½ way line). Markers/cones as goals - 1 ball between 2 players.

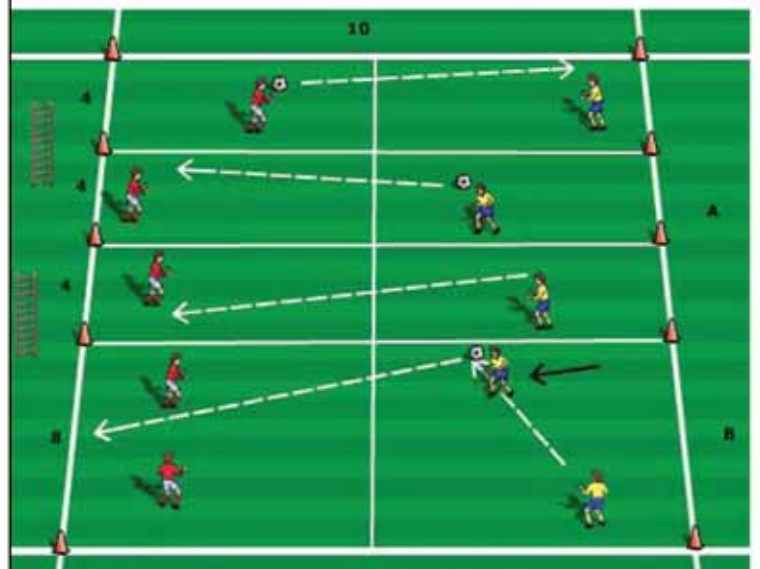
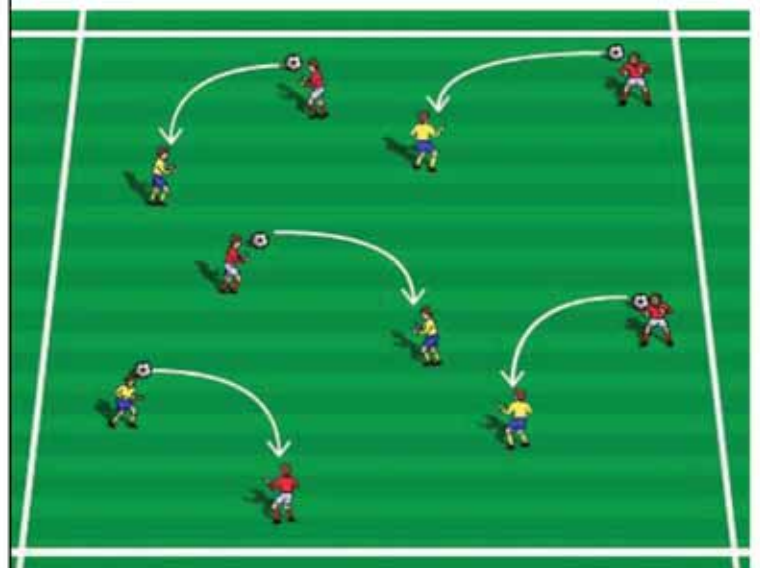
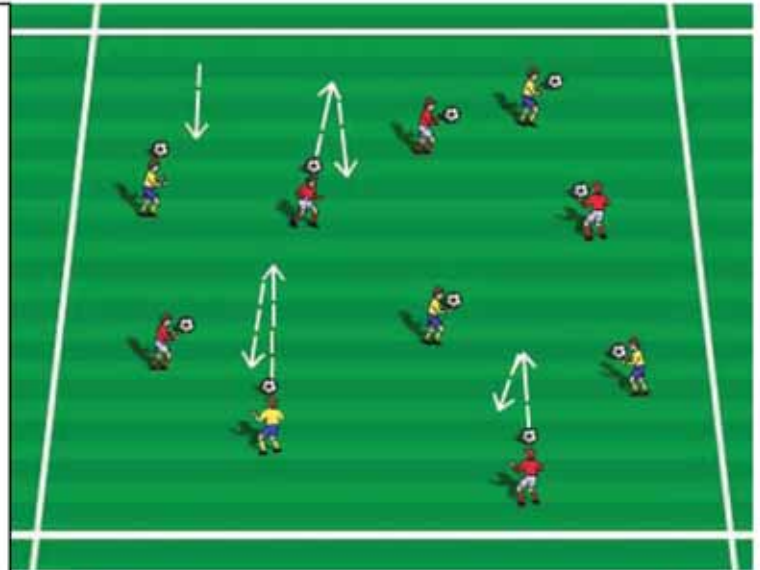
**Game B** 2 v 2 – approx. 10 x 8.

**Objective:** Players self feed and try and score in opposite goal – players must be in own ½ half of the field.

**Variation:** Play for set time and move up and down ladder based on score / opponents feed / into 2 v 2 partner feeds.

**Technique:** As drill and development activity.

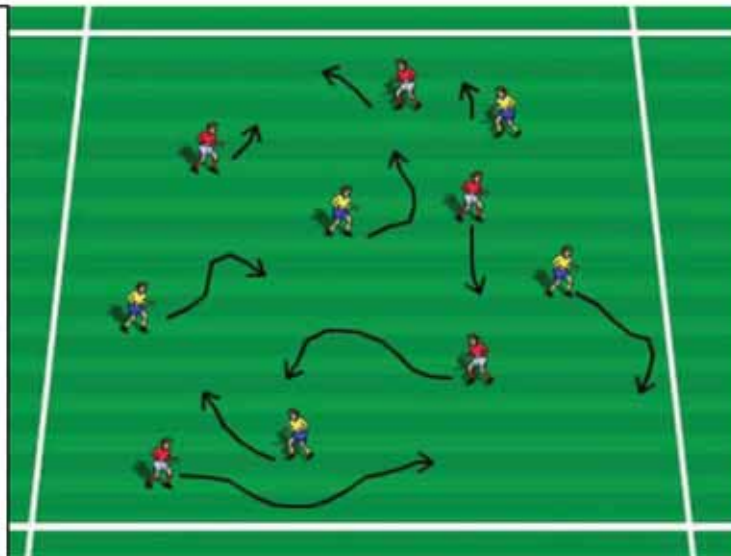
Please note that it is advised that foam balls or softer/lighter footballs should be used for children heading sessions and that these sessions should be small sided and of short duration



#### Cool Down 1

**Set Up:** Players gently move freely within a set area and respond to calls from the Coach e.g. up, down, stop, go, turn -opposites etc. Conclude with static stretches and fun activity of “Do This Do That.”

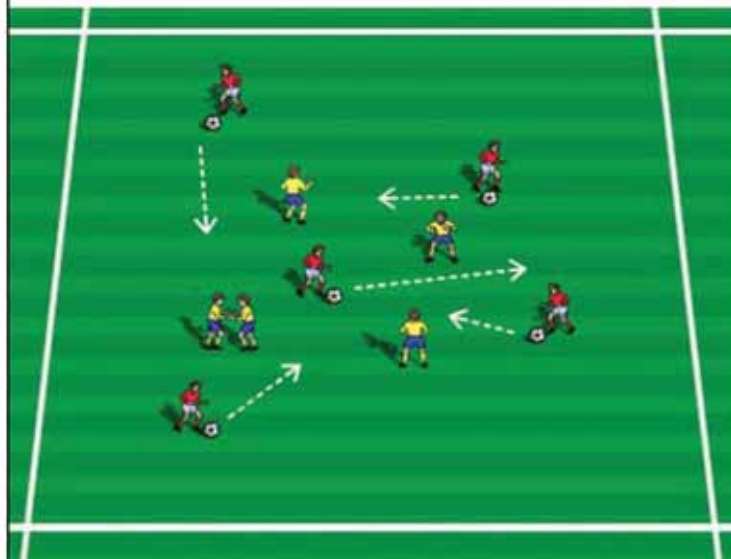
**Objective:** To gradually reduce heart rate and lower body temperature to resting state, encourage good habits i.e. stretching.



#### Cool Down 2

**Set Up:** Half the group dribble freely in a defined area, whilst the other half carry out static stretching activity. Switch group every 45 – 60secs. Players in possession can use the stretching players to perform gentle moves.

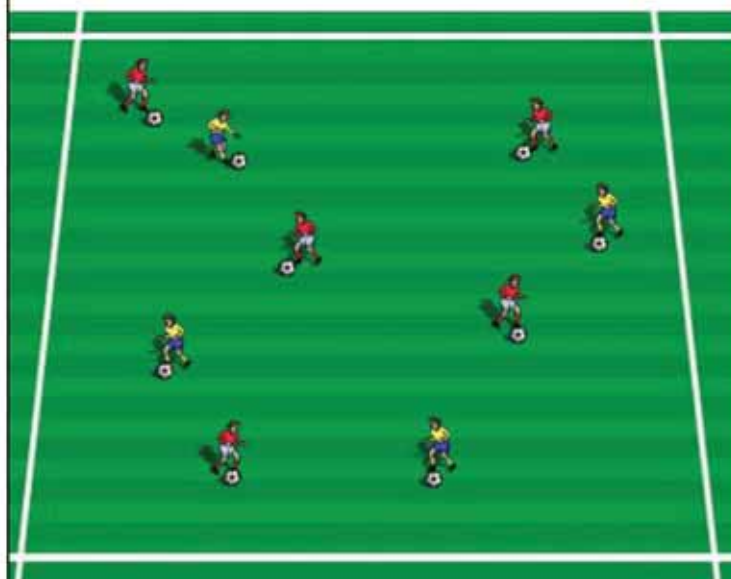
**Objective:** To gradually reduce heart rate and lower body temperature to resting state, encourage good habits i.e. stretching.



#### Cool Down 3

Each Player has a ball and dribbles gently around the area. On the Coaches command the Players perform the following: carve a V / heel to toe / inside, inside / inside, outside / sole of foot right, sole of foot left.

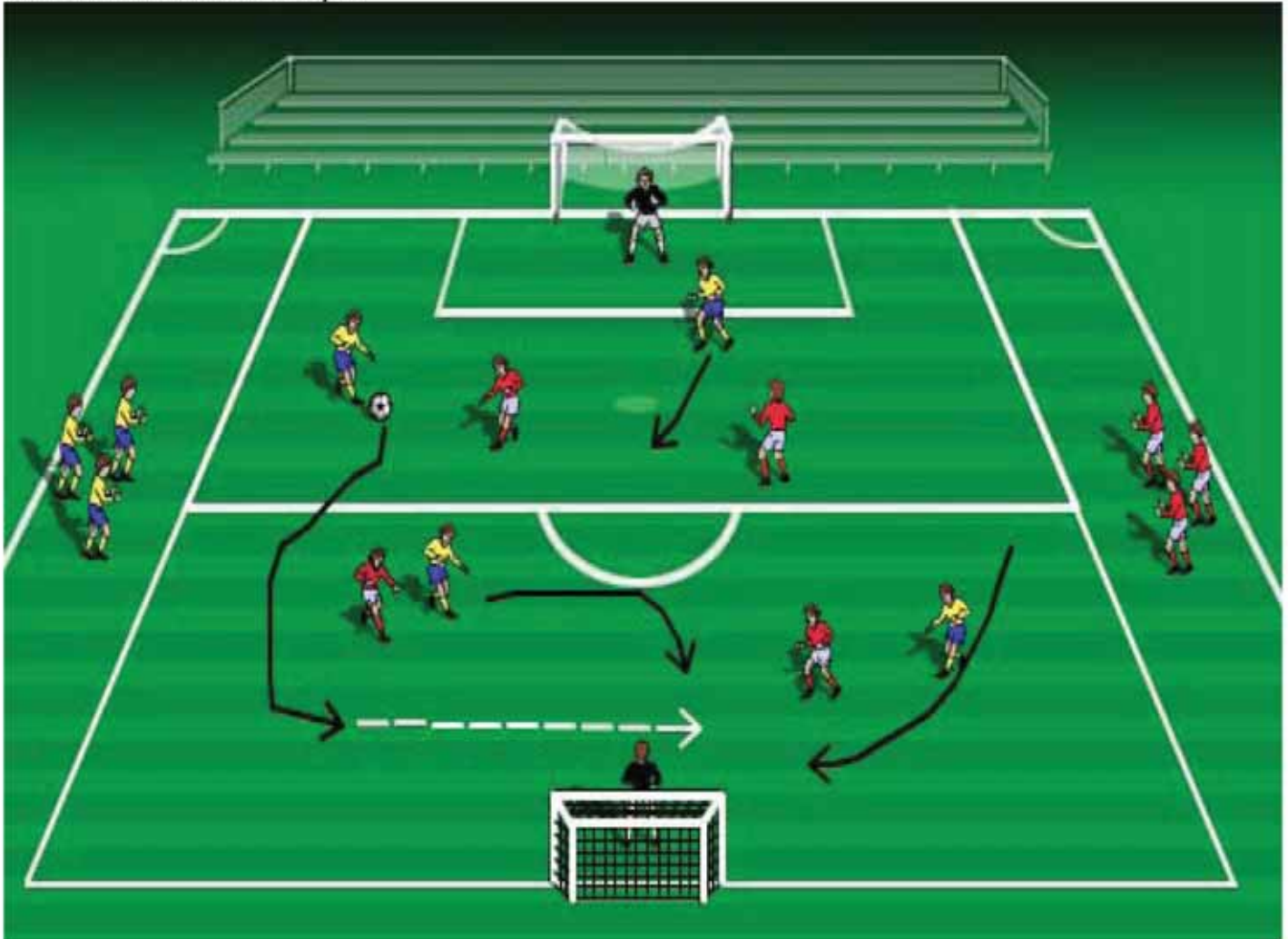
**Objective:** To gradually reduce heart rate and lower body temperature to resting state, encourage good habits i.e. stretching.



### THEME: Futsal

#### Description

Futsal is a great way for children to develop modern football skills and improve their technique through the winter months. The game helps to develop fast, quick thinking and skilful players. The game is played indoors to touchlines not walls, making players use drag-backs and other skills to utilise space, retain possession and create goalscoring opportunities. 4 v 4 (+ goalkeepers) it is the optimum number of players to enhance skill and technique.



#### Futsal develops skills that are realistic

- Motor Ability – balance, agility and coordination.
- Perception – insight, awareness and vision.
- Problem solving – Choices and decisions.
- Physical – Fitness.
- Psychological domain – fun, enjoyment and competition.
- Learning – Discovery, trial and error, repetition, playing.

Check out [www.footballcentral.org](http://www.footballcentral.org) for more information on Futsal



### THEME: Small Sided Games 1 - 3

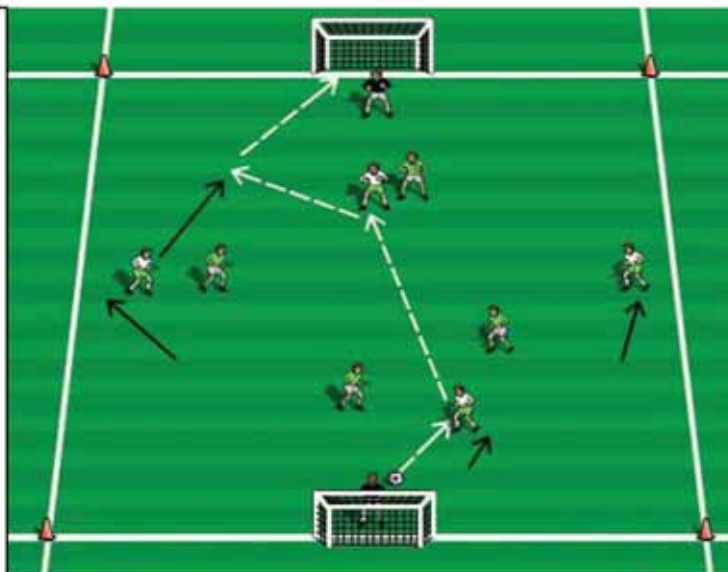
#### Game 1: 4 v 4 with Goalkeepers

Players are encouraged to keep “diamond” shape and play game as normal.

Coach can condition game to 2/3 touches per player depending on ability of group.

When goal is scored game is restarted by goalkeeper throwing/passing the ball out.

*Field Dimensions: 25 x 20*

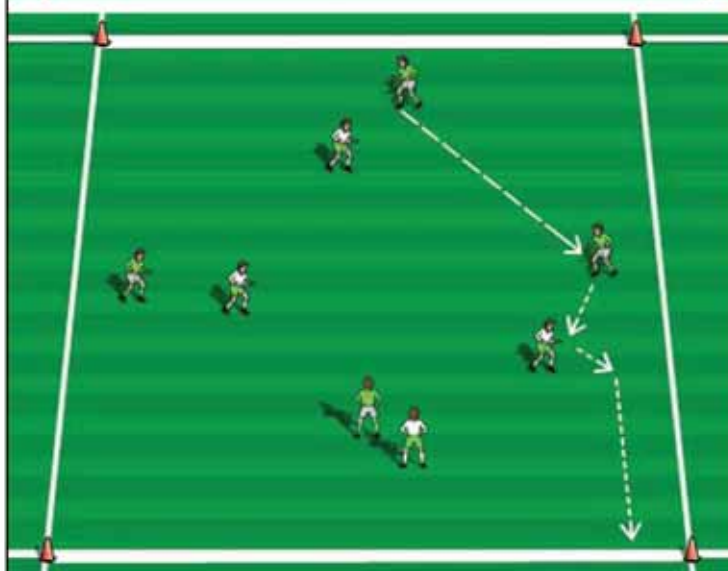


#### Game 2: Line ball

Players are encouraged to keep possession of the ball until opportunity arises to dribble the ball and stop it on the line to score.

Game is restarted with opposition passing the ball out from the end line – 1<sup>st</sup> pass free – no pressure allowed from opposition.

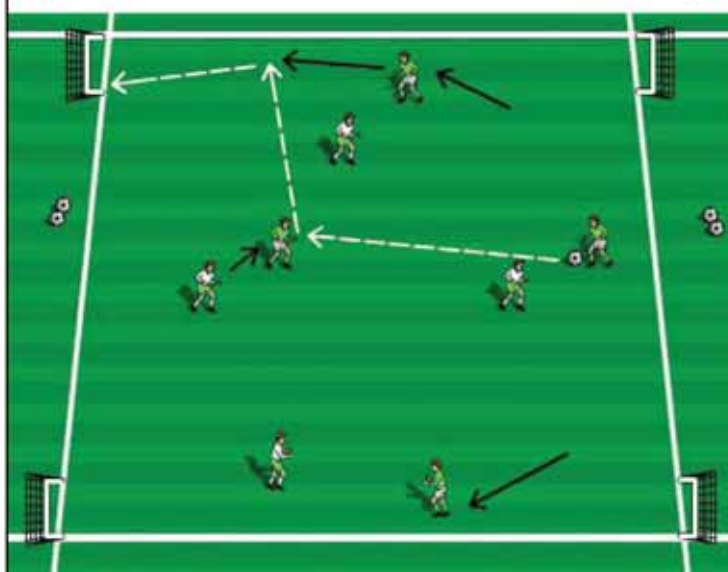
*Field Dimensions: 25 x 20 (defined line or 2.5 end- zone)*



#### Game 3: 4-Goal Game (wide pitch)

Players can score goals in either wide goal. Game is directional game restarts with kick in from end line – 1<sup>st</sup> pass free – no pressure allowed from opposition.

*Field Dimensions: 20 x 30*

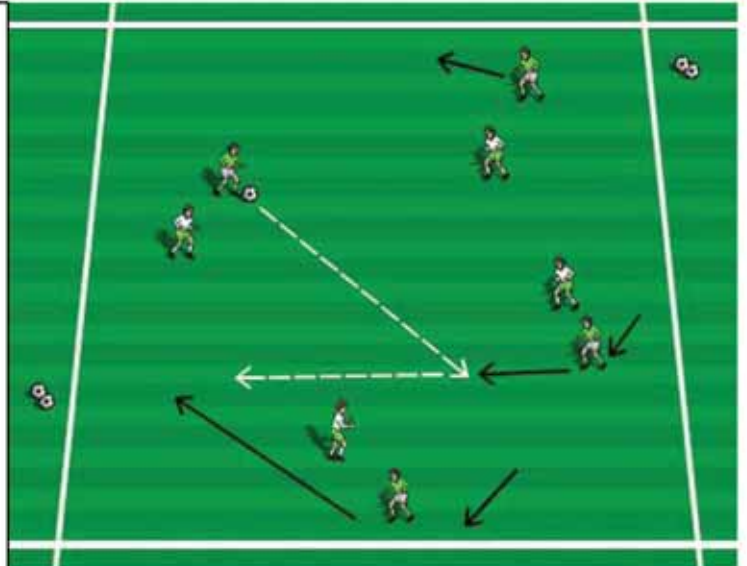


#### Game 4: Possession Box

Players score goal by keeping possession and completing successive passes – number determined by coach. The amount shall be determined by the ability of the players.

Game can also be continued to amount of touches each player is allowed.

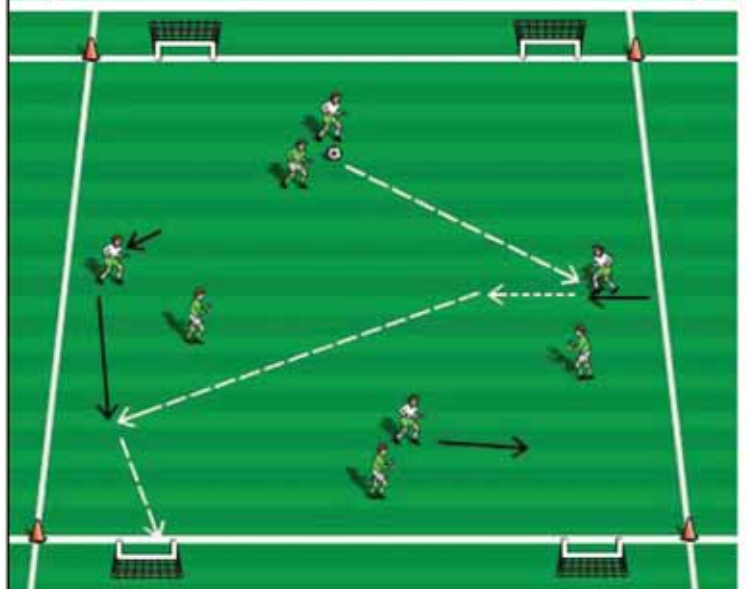
*Field Dimensions: 25 x 20*



#### Game 5: 4-Goal Game (narrow)

Players can score goals in either of the narrow goals. Game is directional and when a goal is scored play restarts with a kick in from the end line – 1<sup>st</sup> pass free – no pressure allowed from opposition.

*Field Dimensions: 25 x 20*

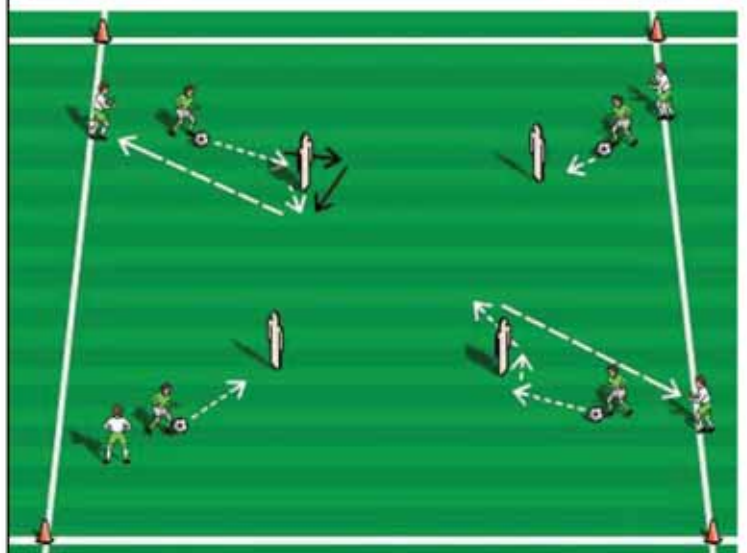


#### Game 6: Creative Player

Players take on mannequins using a series of moves to beat an opponent as instructed by coach.

When player dribbles past mannequin they pass back to partner who repeats the process.

*Field Dimensions: 20 x 20*



### THEME: Small Sided Games 7, 8 and Festival Layout

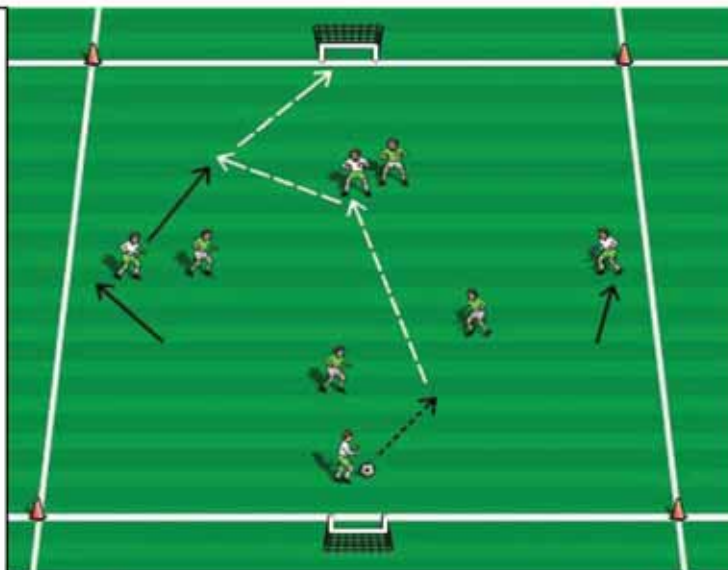
#### Game 7: 4 v 4 Without Goalkeepers

Players are encouraged to keep “diamond” shape and play game as normal.

Coach can condition game to 2/3 touch per player depending on ability of group.

When goal is scored play restarts with a kick in from the goal area – 1<sup>st</sup> pass free – no pressure allowed from opposition.

*Field Dimensions: 25 x 20*

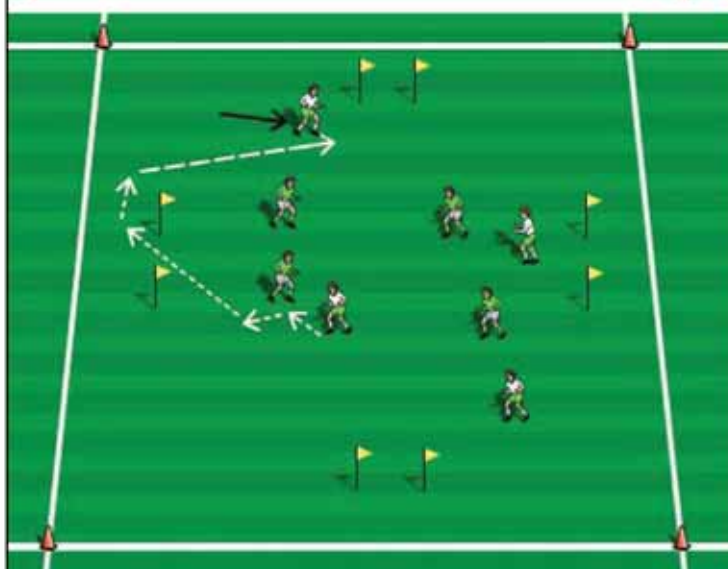


#### Game 8: 4-Goal Dribbling Game

Players are encouraged to keep possession until opportunity arises to dribble past the opposition and between the flags – tramp on ball to score.

Team that has been scored on restart play with a pass to one of their teammates – 1<sup>st</sup> pass free – no pressure allowed on opposition.

*Field Dimensions: 25 x 20*

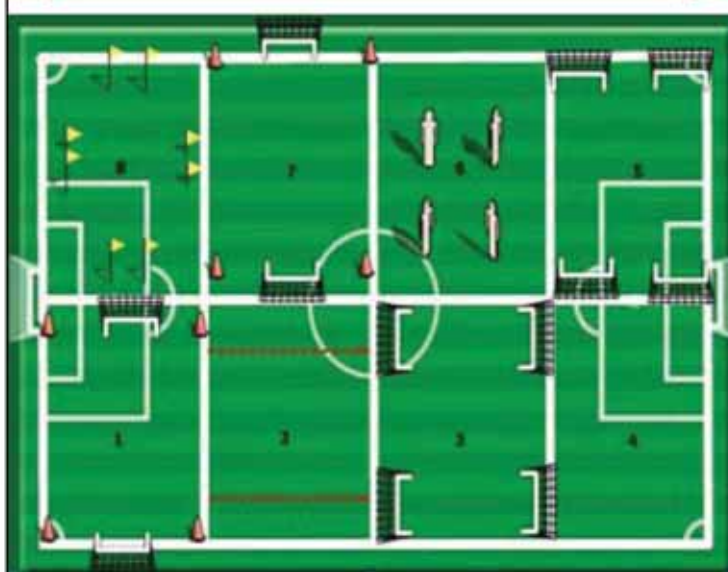


#### Full Pitch Layout

- 1 - 4v4 with goalkeeper
- 2 - Line ball
- 3 - 4 goal game (wide)
- 4 - Possession box
- 5 - 4 goal game (narrow)
- 6 - Creative Player
- 7 - 4v4 without goalkeepers
- 8 - 4 goal dribbling game

#### Equipment

- 12 goals
- 8 Poles
- 4 mannequins
- 20 footballs
- markers
- bibs



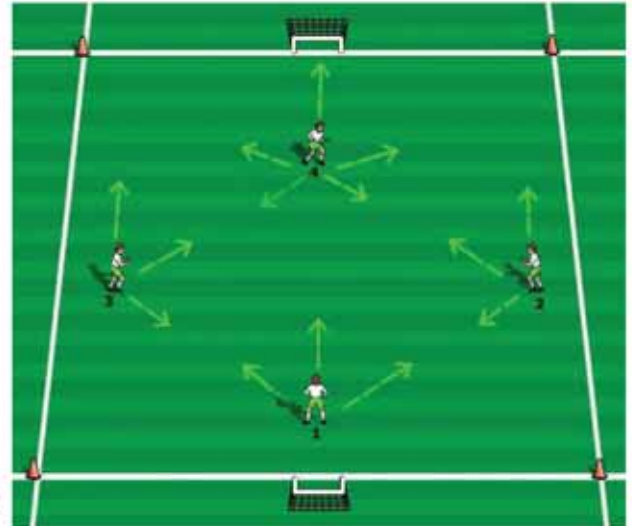
#### 4's Formation & Players Options

Adopt a “diamond” shape to maximise the following options:

**Attacking** – Ball forward quickly / support to ball quickly / movement to receive the pass / pass and support to retain possession / big pitch – length, width, depth.

**Defending** - Deny quick pass forward / deny space, time and passing options / small pitch – reduce area in which to play.

**Individual Key Points:** Weight, timing and angle of pass / timing and angle of support / body shape to receive.



#### 7aside Formation & Player Options

Setting up in a 2 – 3 – 1 formation (with goalkeepers) allows the team to continue the “diamond” shape. Player 2, 4, 5 and 7 e.g. create the shape on the right also players 3, 6, 5 and 7 create the shape on the left. All the key points relevant in the 4's can be applied to the 7aside game.

