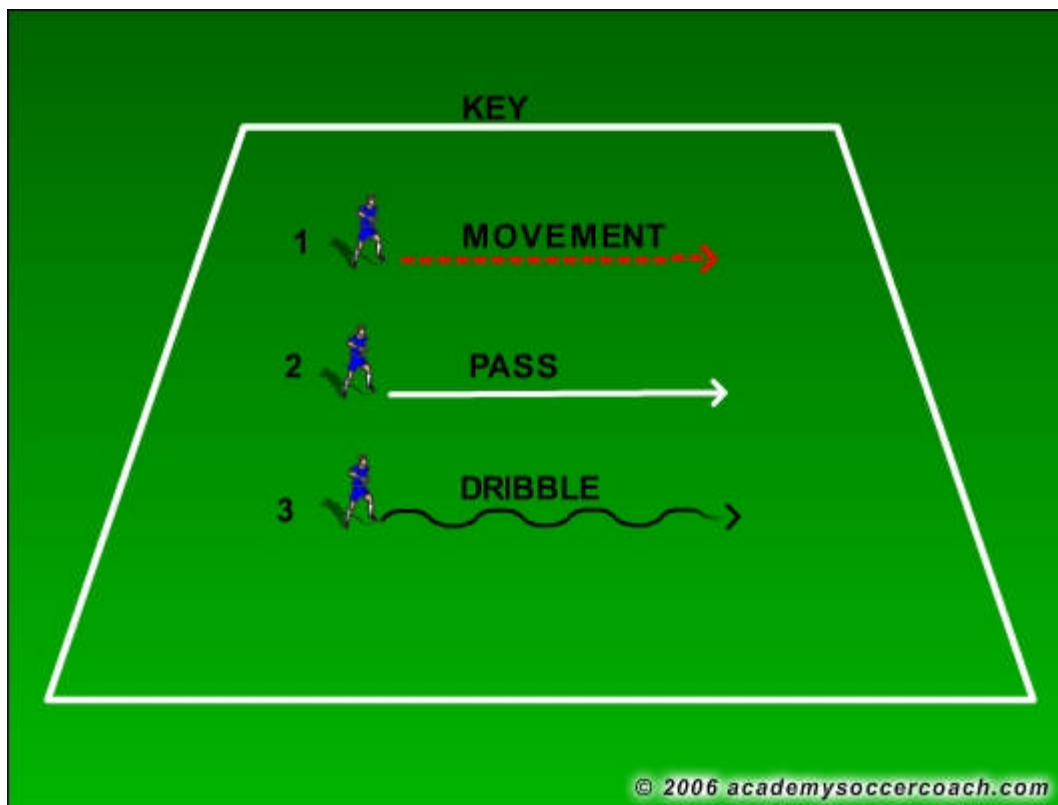


# 4v4 GAMES

academysoccercoach  
academysoccercoach

## KEY TO THE DIAGRAMS



## **Introduction**

There are many debates on how best to coach the next generation of football players. This manual is putting forward the case for the 4v4 games method.

In recent years, the 4v4 method has rapidly increased in popularity across Europe and North America however this method is certainly not a new one.

The method was introduced by the Dutch Football Association back in the 1980's under the guidance of Rinus Michel's, the creator of total football. The Dutch recognised the decline in street football and the damaging effects it would have on developing players in future generations. This is how the 4v4 method was born and it's widely known as "the Dutch way"

In this two part manual we have designed over 40 different 4v4 games. The games are tried and tested with both grassroots beginners and top youth players in professional academies. The games are designed to stimulate the players and lead them down a path of learning. These manuals bring the 4v4 concept into the new era and will develop your players in a fun, player led environment.

Below is a list of benefits for the 4v4 method

- No coaching, the game is the teacher
- Simple to set up
- Simplifies the choices in possession [pass, dribble, shoot]
- More player participation
- Different games bring different problems to solve and skills used
- More touches of the ball
- More passes attempted
- More 1v1's attempted
- More goals scored
- When used, keeper participation is greatly increased
- No refs
- No results recorded
- No positions, just footballers
- Children take responsibility

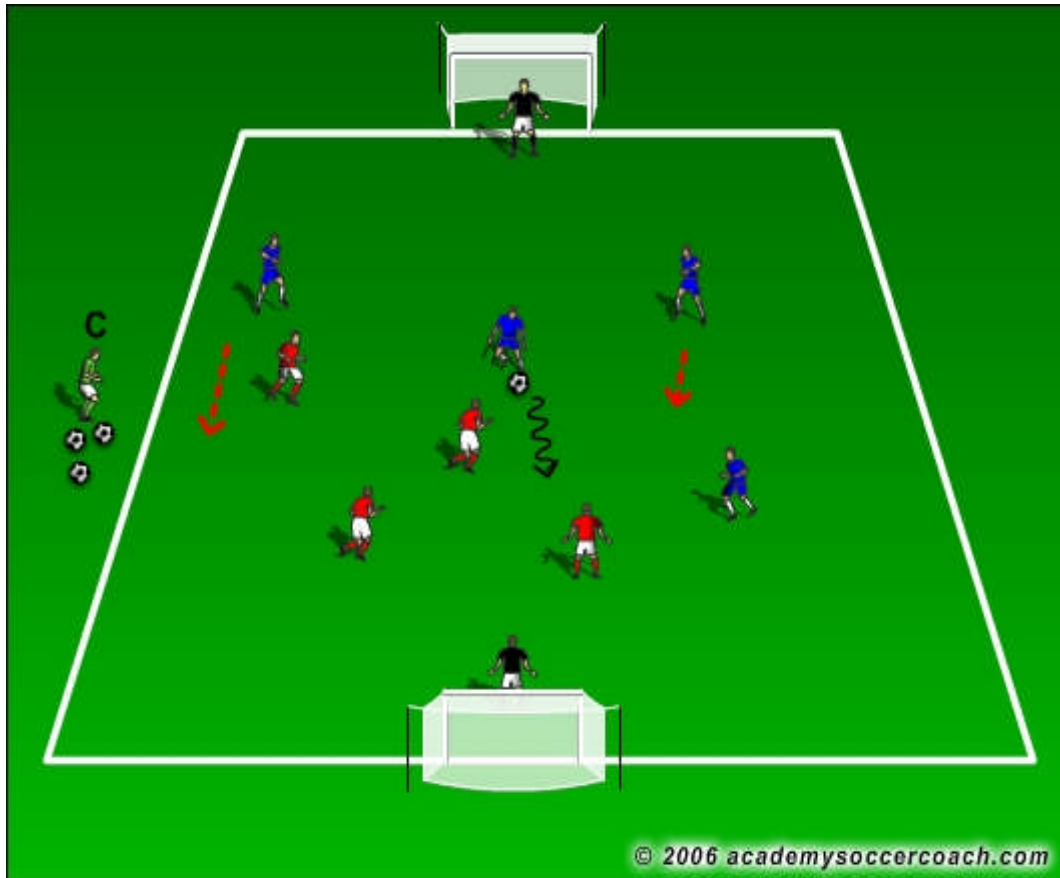
## **4V4 GAMES**

1. 2 goal game
2. 2 goal game – one touch finish
3. 2 goal game – score in the end zone
4. 2 goal game – rotate positions
5. 2 goal game – any keeper
6. 4 goal game – score in every goal
7. Skinny pitch
8. Target man
9. Sweeper game
10. Switch goals
11. Triangle goal game
12. Volley and catch
13. Wide pitch
14. Possession v pressure
15. Possession game
16. Possession add one
17. Play out, go out
18. Overload continuous
19. Overload game
20. One team possession, one team score
21. Gates game
22. Free your team mate
23. Half field possession
24. Multi ball game
25. Multi goal game
26. End zone game
27. Directional game
28. Centre circle game
29. Switch play, role reversal game
30. Angled goals

“Give them a ball and set them free,  
young footballers have a great way of  
working the rest out for themselves”

M. Beale

## 2 GOAL GAME



### Set up/ rules

- four v four
  - 2 keepers
  - no offside
  - if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
- 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 –the players dribble in
- play for a set time period and then change ends
  - the keepers can change with the team or stay in the same goal and now play for the opposite team

## TWO GOAL GAME – 1 TOUCH FINISH



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- no offside
- can only score by using a first time shot
- if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options

- 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
- 2 –the players take a roll in
- 3 –the players take a throw in
- 4 –the players make a pass in
- 5 – the players dribble in

- The game is played for a set time period

## TWO GOAL GAME – SCORE IN THE END ZONE

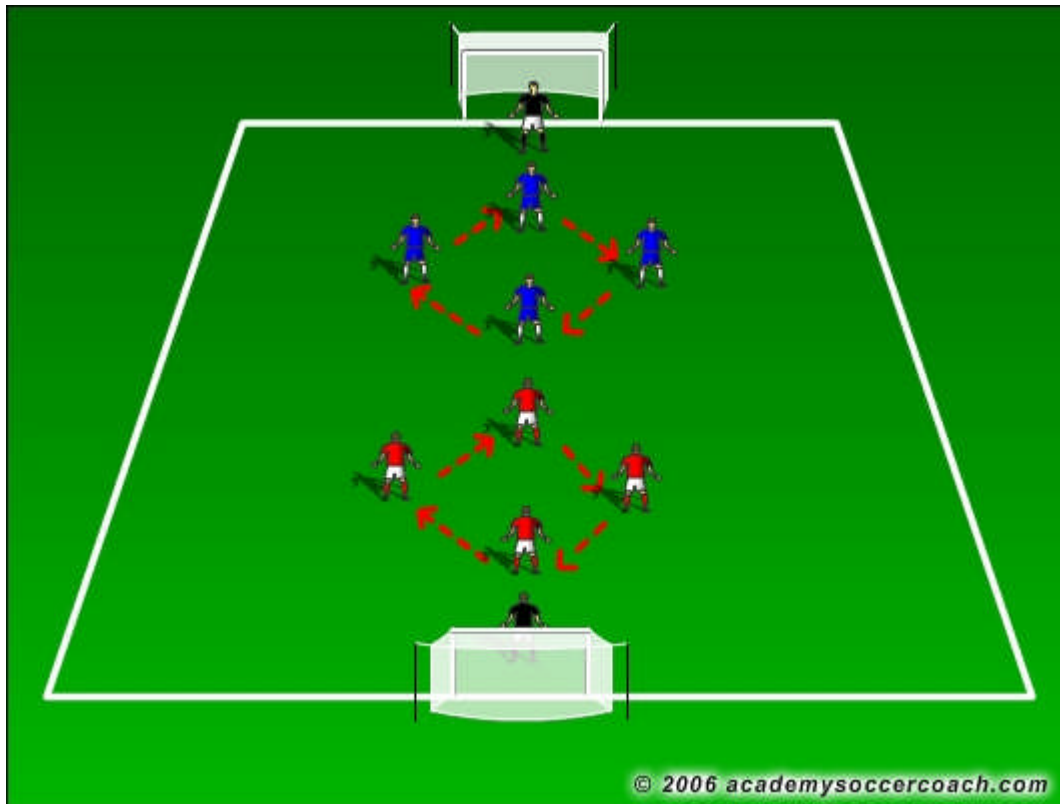


### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- the pitch has two end zones and two empty goals
- a goal can only be scored from inside the end zones
- no keepers
- if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
  - 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 – the players dribble in
- the game is played for a set time period



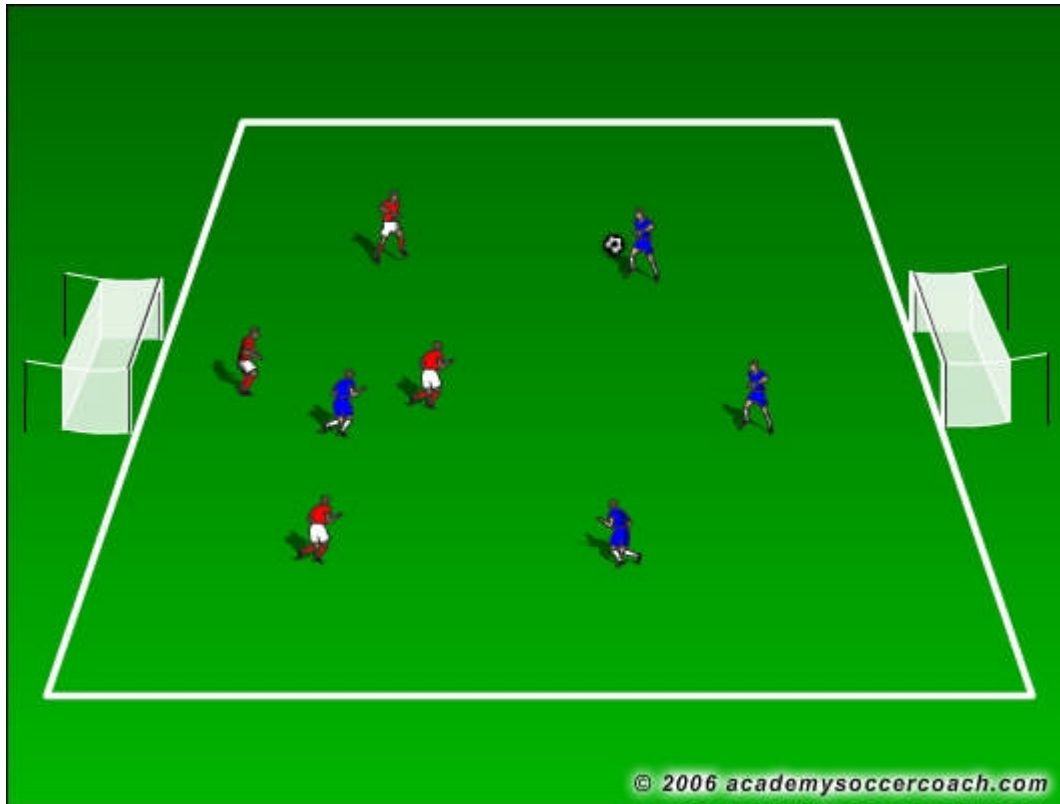
## TWO GOAL GAME – ROTATE POSITIONS



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
  - two keepers
  - no offside
  - if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
- 
- 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 –the players dribble in
- 
- The game is played for 15 minutes. This is broken down into 4x3 minute periods with one minute breaks in between.
  - After each 3 minute period the players rotate to the next position on their right. This rule will see the players playing in all four positions of the diamond [top, bottom, left and right] also the players will also come up against a different opponent in each period of the game

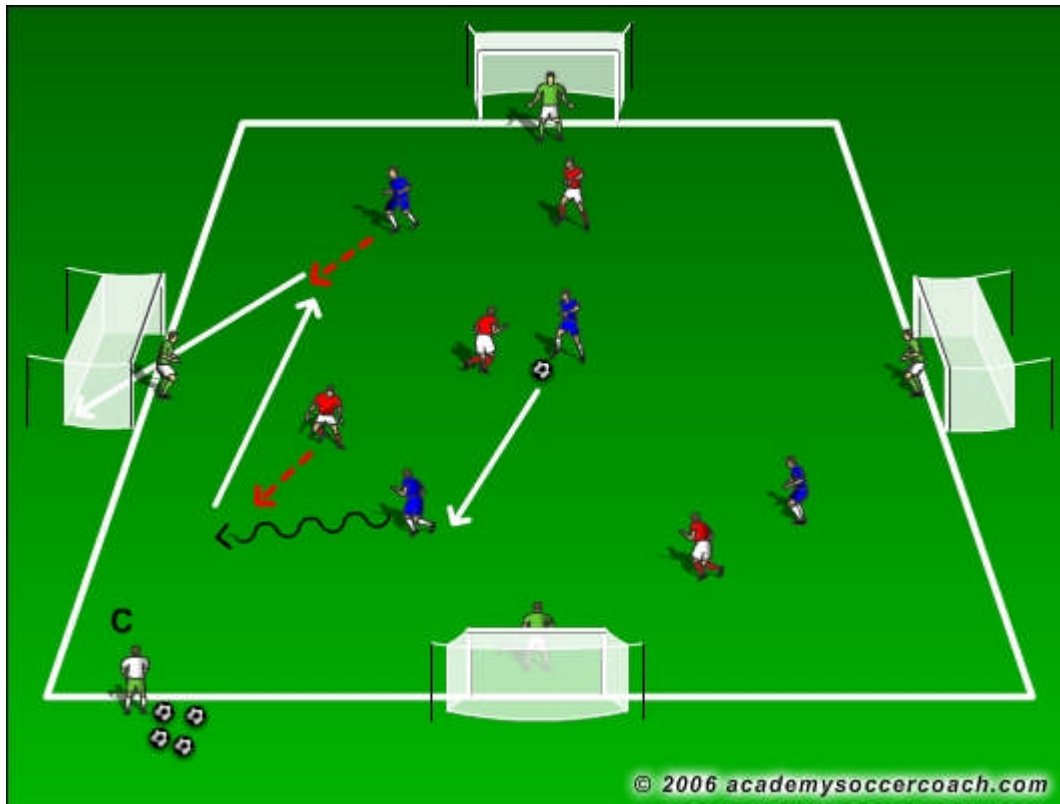
## TWO GOAL GAME – ANY GOALKEEPER



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- the nearest player[s] to the goal become the keeper[s]
- no offside
- if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
  - 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 –the players dribble in
- the game is played for a set time period

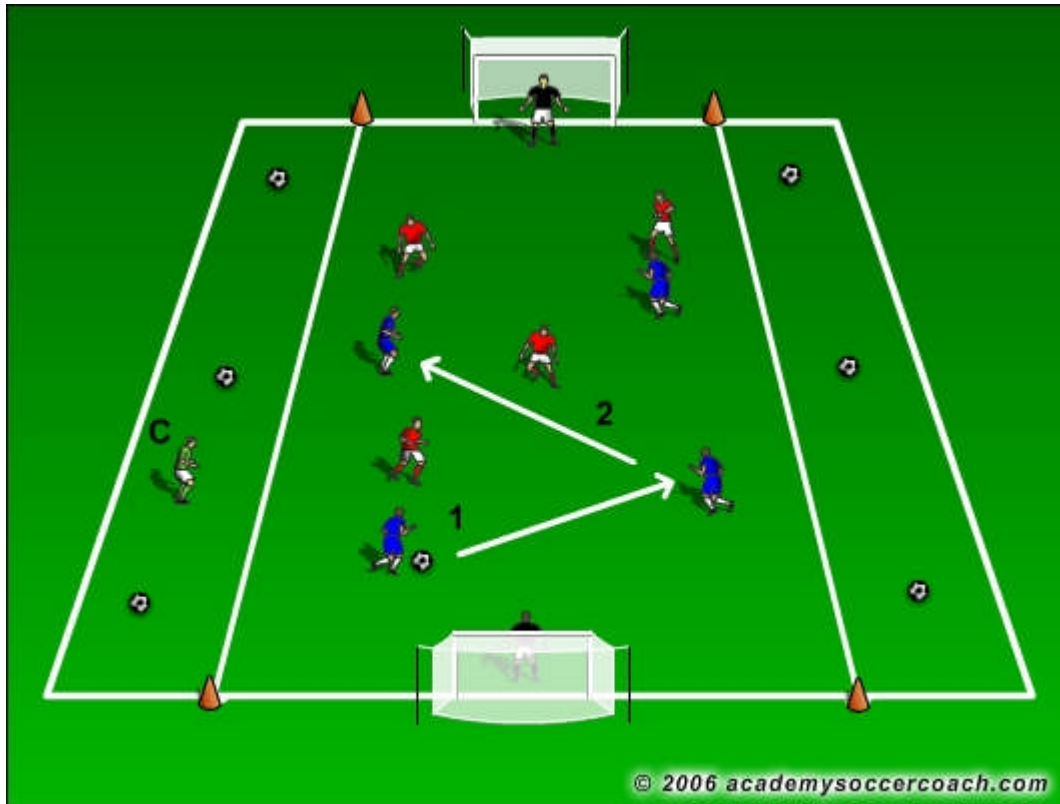
## **FOUR GOAL GAME – MUST SCORE IN EACH GOAL**



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- four keepers
- no offside
- if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
  - 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 – the players dribble in
- The aim for both teams is to score in all four goals. The team to complete this task first is declared the winners

## TWO GOAL – SKINNY PITCH



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
  - two keepers
  - no offside
  - if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
- 
- 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 – the players dribble in
- 
- the pitch is long in length but short in width. This forces the teams to try to build up through the middle of the pitch using quick skill and passing combinations
  - the game is played for a set time period

## TWO GOAL GAME – TARGET MAN



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
  - two keepers
  - three zones
  - no offside
  - if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
- 
- 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 –the players dribble in
- 
- Each team sends one player to be the “target man”. This player stands in the attacking end zone. The aim of the game is to play a pass into your target man and then receive a lay off pass in order to shoot at goal.
  - After a shot is made. The shooting player changes positions with the target man.
  - The game is played for a set time period

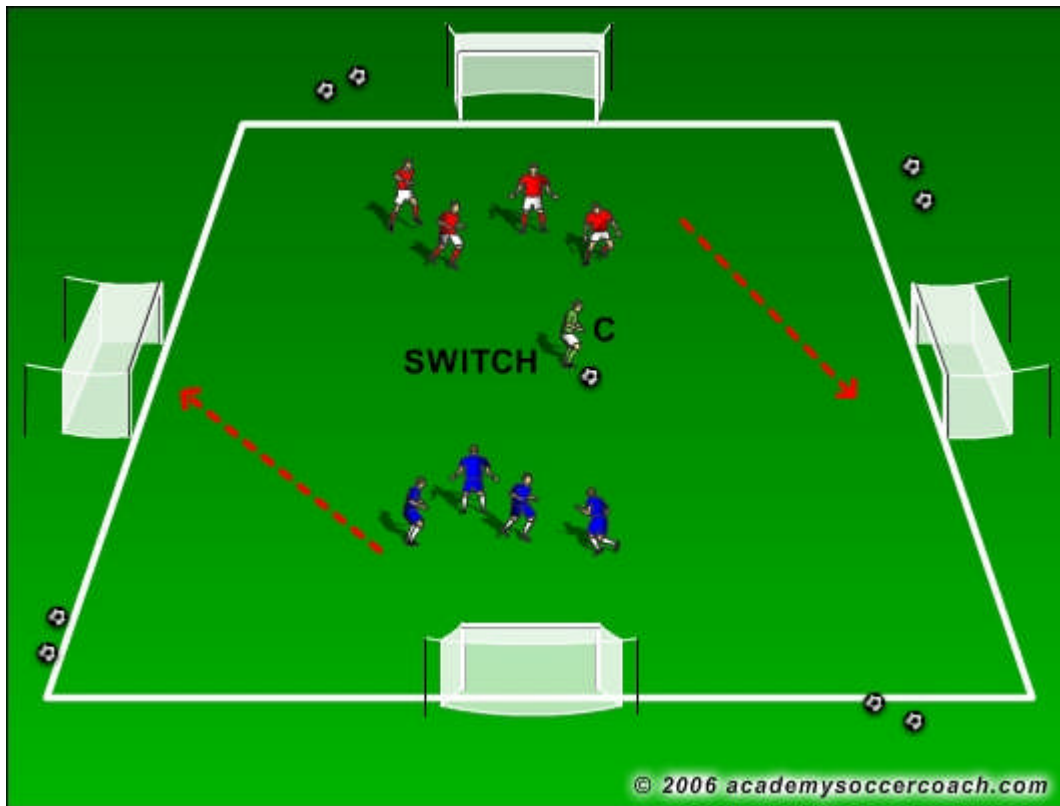
## TWO GOAL GAME – SWEEPER SYSTEM



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
  - two keepers
  - three zones
  - no offside
  - if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
- 
- 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 – the players dribble in
- 
- each team send one of their players into their defensive zone to become the sweeper / covering defender.
  - The aim of the game is to dribbling through the middle zone and into the opponents defensive zone. Now the player in possession has a 1v1 against the sweeper / covering defender.
  - Rotate the players so that each player spends time in the sweeper position
  - The game is played for a set time period

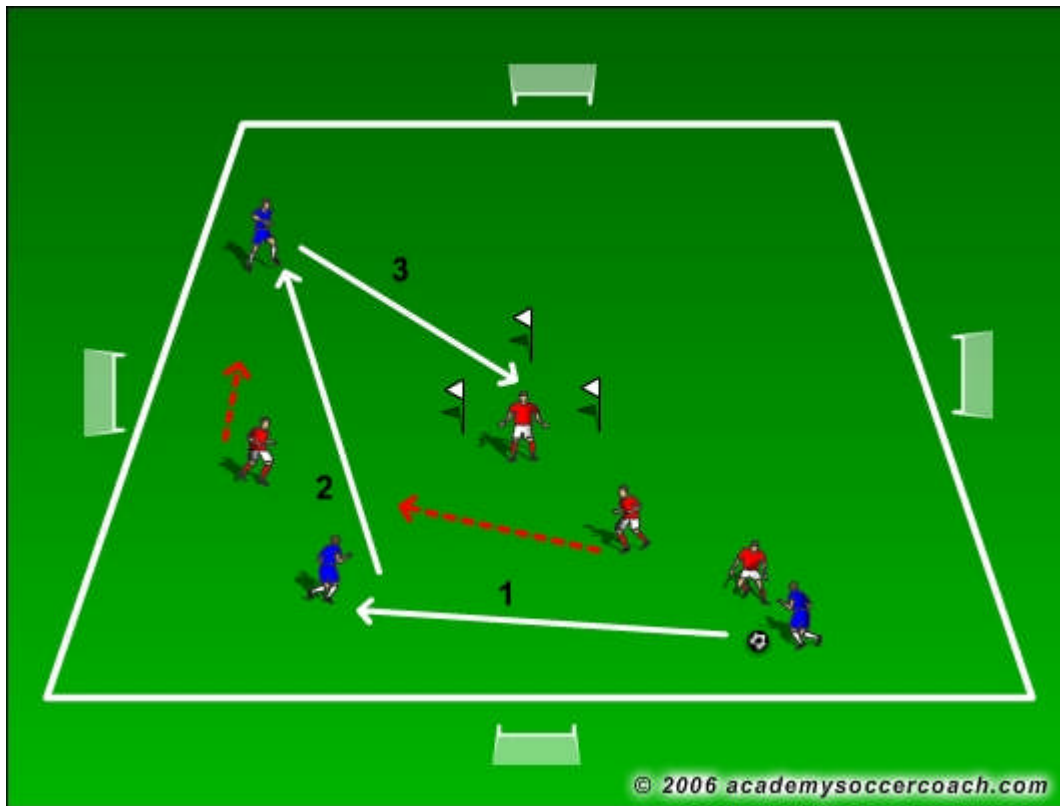
## SWITCH GOALS



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- four goals
- no offside
- if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
  - 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 –the players dribble in
- To start the game, the coach gives each team a goal to defend. The nearest player to the goal can act as the team's goalkeeper. When the coach calls out to "switch". Both teams must quickly switch the goal that they are defending and attacking. In the diagram above, the teams must switch and defend the goal to their left.
- The game is played until both teams have defended all four goals

## TRIANGLE GOAL



### Set up / rules

- Two teams of four players
- Four mini goals
- Three flags to make a triangle goal
- If ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
  - 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 –the players dribble in
- One team is defending the triangle goal and one team is defending the four mini goals. The team that is defending the triangle goal must nominate a goalkeeper whilst the other three players try to pressure and win the ball.
- The game is played for two periods. The roles are reversed for the second period



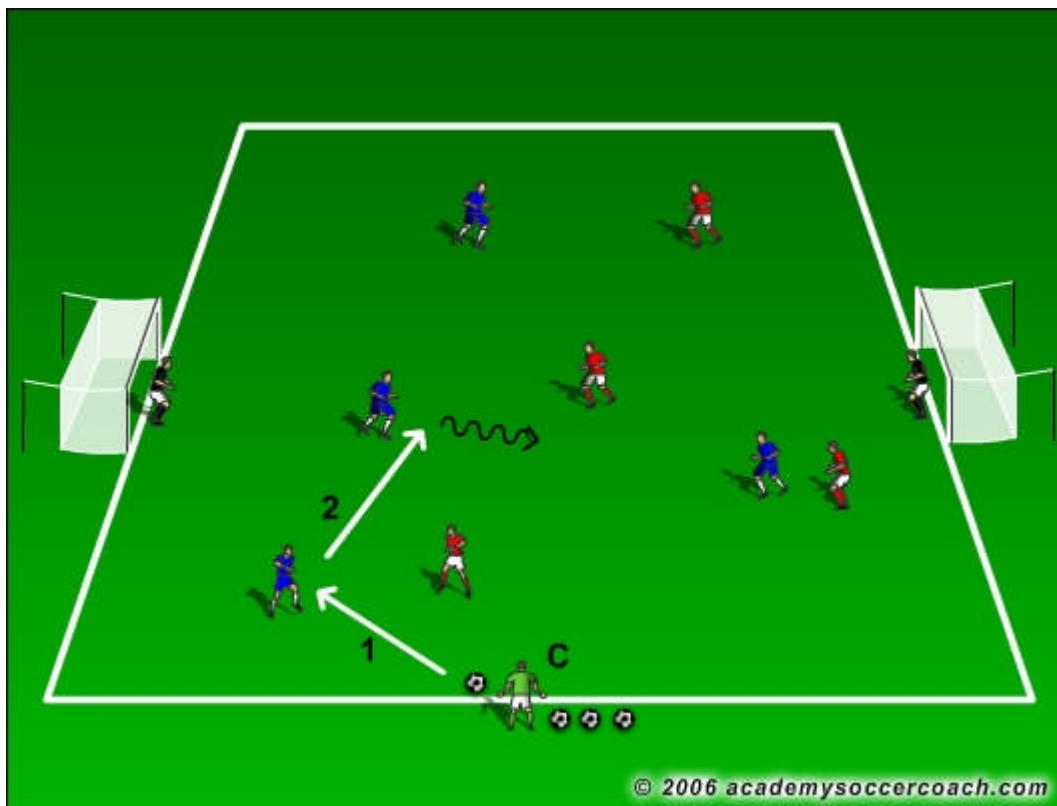
## VOLLEY AND CATCH



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- no offside
- if the ball leaves play, the game is re-started by a volley pass
- the player in possession is allowed to make a one, one bounce movement [basketball style]
- to pass the ball, the players must make a volley pass out of their hands to one of their team-mates
- to score a goal, the players must make a volley shot into one of the opponent's goals.
- The game is played for a set time period

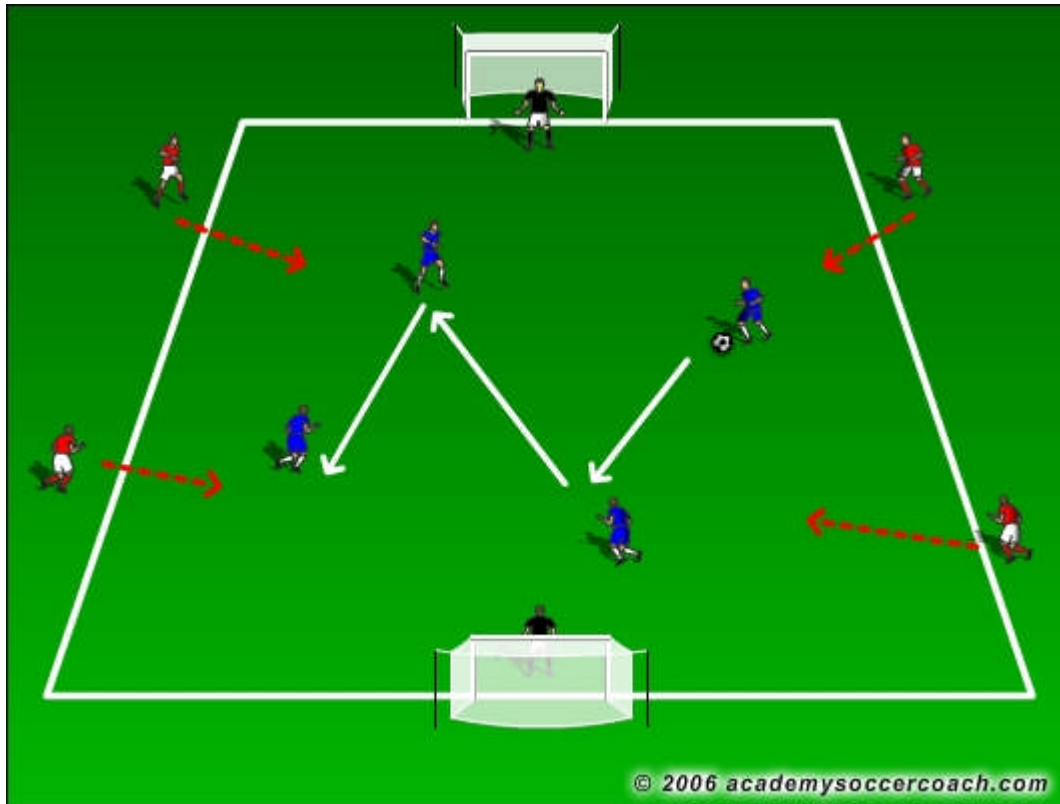
## WIDE PITCH



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- two goalkeepers
- no offside
- if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
  - 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 –the players dribble in
- The game is played on a wide pitch that is short in length. This encourages the following tactics from the teams
  - 1 –shoot from distance
  - 2 –pass the ball into wide areas and create crossing opportunities

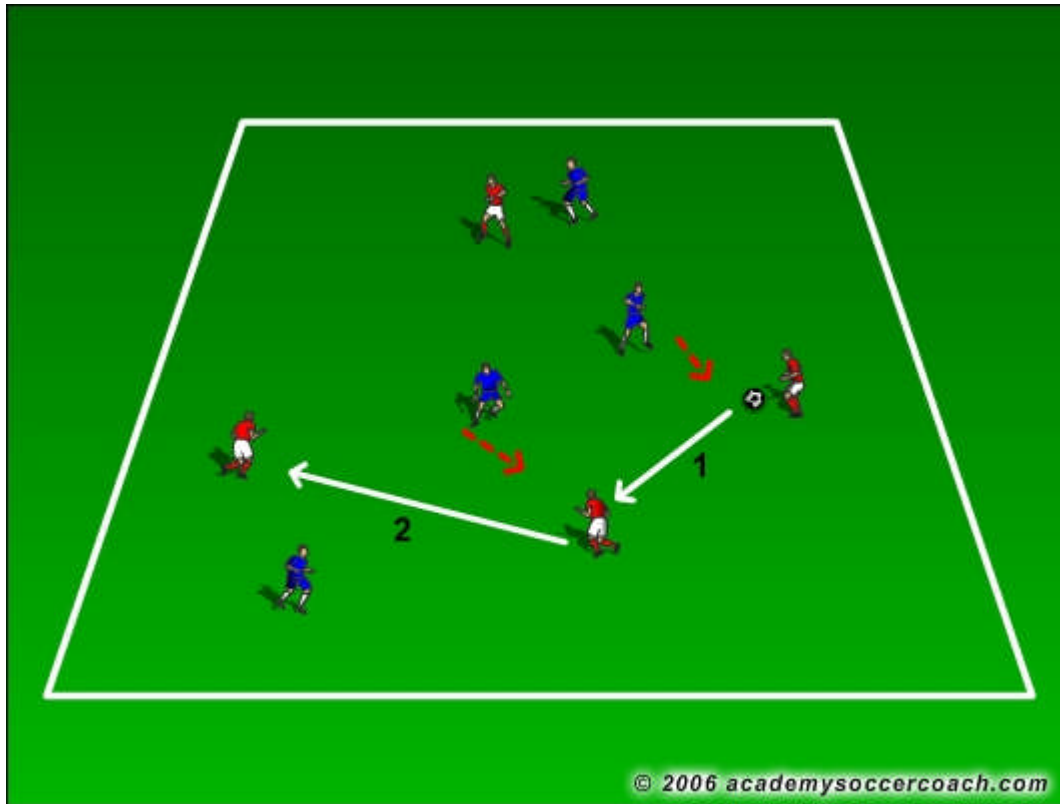
## POSSESSION V PRESSURE



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- two keepers
- no offside
- if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
  - 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players make a pass in
  - 4 –the players dribble in
- One team starts on the pitch and passes the ball. On the coaches' whistle, the team on the outside must race onto the pitch and try to win the ball and then score a goal. The passing team must try to keep possession.
- The passing team can use the keepers to keep possession of the ball
- The pressuring team have 30 seconds to win the ball and score a goal, if they fail then the passing team gets awarded the goal
- Rotate the teams for the next game

## POSSESSION GAME



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
  - no offside
  - if ball leaves play, the coach has a few re-start options
- 1 –the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
  - 2 –the players take a roll in
  - 3 –the players take a throw in
  - 4 –the players make a pass in
  - 5 –the players dribble in
- the teams must keep possession of the ball
  - a goal is awarded to the team that completes a certain number of passes. This acts as an extra incentive to both teams
  - The game is played for a set time period

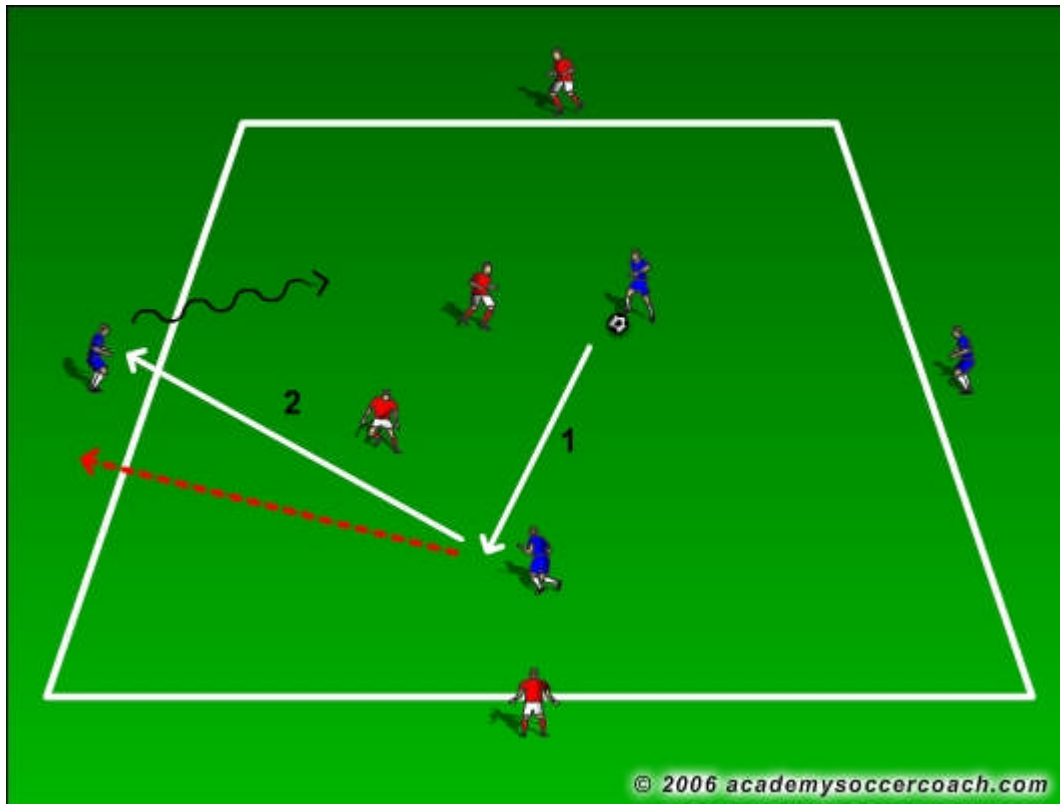
## POSSESSION - ADD ONE



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- one team act as the passing team
- one team act as the defending team
- the passing team spread out into the 15 x 15 yard area and begin the game by playing 4v1
- after 30 seconds, an extra defender is added to make the game 4v2,4v3,4v4
- the game is played for 2 ½ minutes
- the passing team must count the number of successful passes that they make
- the teams rotate roles for the next game and the new passing team tries to beat the number of passes made by their opponents

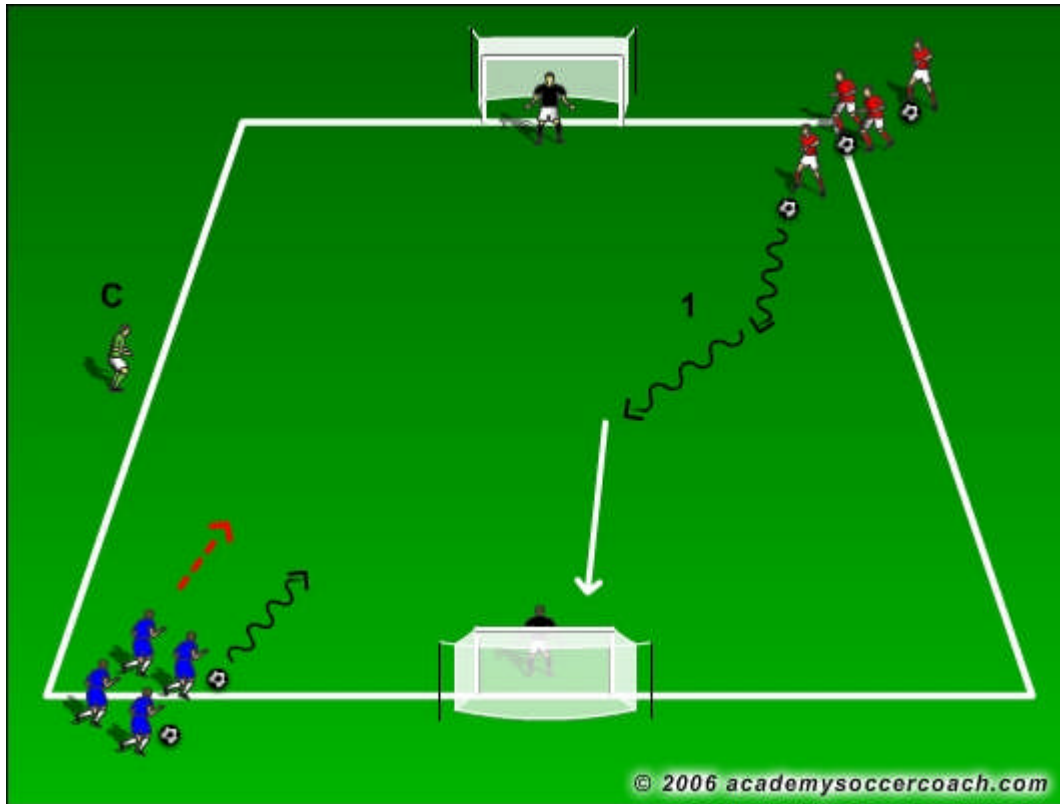
## PLAY OUT, GO OUT



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- if ball leaves play, the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch
- both teams must have two players on the pitch and two players on the outside of the pitch
- The aim of the game is to make a pass out to a team-mate. The passing player then goes to the outside whilst the receiving player dribbles into the area
- a goal is awarded for each successful pass to an outside player
- the game is played for a set time period

## OVERLOAD GAME CONTINUOUS



### Set up / rules

- two teams of four players
- two goalkeepers
- To start the game, the first player on the red team has three touches to score against the blue goalkeeper. Immediately after this ball has been played, two blue team players enter the pitch and make a 2v1 situation against the red player. The game continues until all the players are on the pitch. The series of attacks is as follows

Red	V	Blue
1	V	Gk
1	v	2
3	v	2
3	v	4
4	v	4

- Once all the players are on the pitch, the game continues for a set time period.
- The next game starts with the Blue team attacking first

## OVERLOAD GAME



### Set up / rules

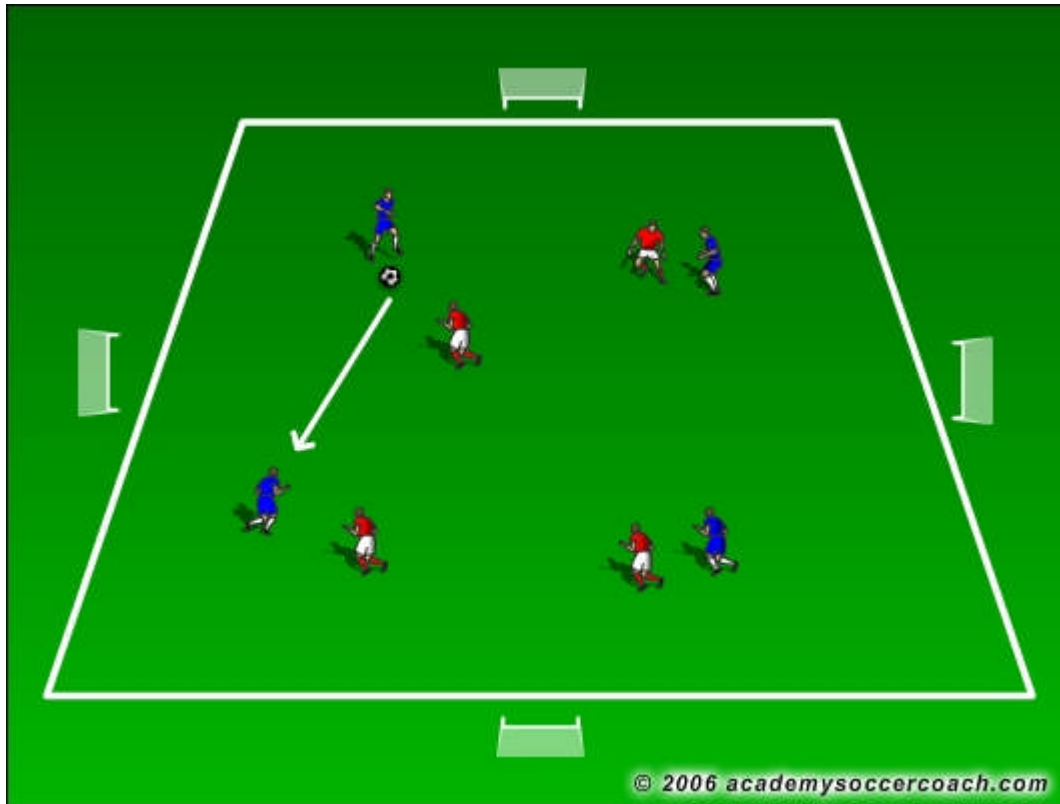
- Two teams of four players
- one goalkeepers
- To start, the first player must dribble towards goal and try to score. The player is limited to three touches. Immediately after this ball has been played, two new players enter the pitch and attempt to score in a 2v1 situation. The series of attacks is as follows

Blues	V	Reds
1	V	Gk
1	v	2
3	v	2
3	v	4
4	v	4

- after all the balls have been played, the score is counted and the teams rotate positions for the next game



## ONE TEAM POSSESSION – ONE TEAM SCORE



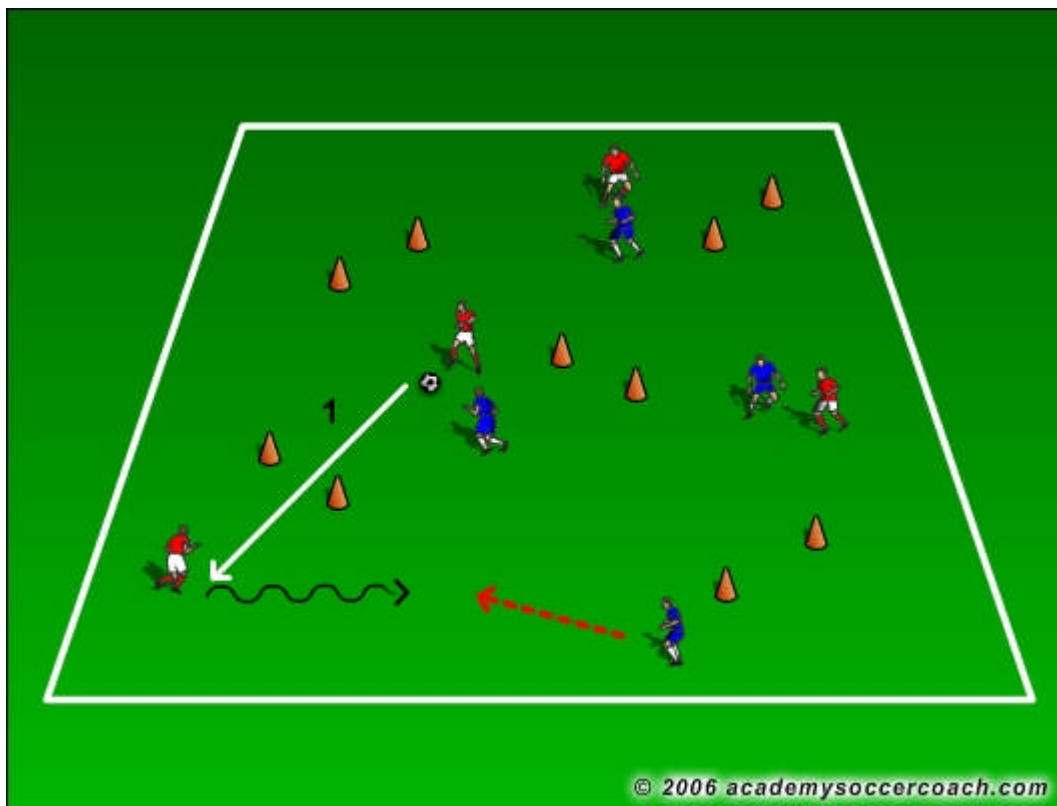
### Set up/rules

- two teams of four players
- four mini target goals
- one team attempts to keep possession
- one team attempts to win the ball and score a goal

There is a number of ways to play this game

- 1 The team passing has to make 6 passes to score a goal, the defending team get a goal for each time they shoot into the mini target goals
- 2 The roles are reversed each time the defending team win the ball, and shoot into the target goals.
- 3 The teams work for a set time period at each role [3 mins possession, 3 mins defending]

## GATES GAME



### Set up/rules

- two teams of four players
- four gates

There is a number of ways this game can be played and scored

- 1 the player in possession must dribble through a gate to score
- 2 the player in possession must make a pass through the gate to a team mate
- 3 the player in possession can use both of the choices above

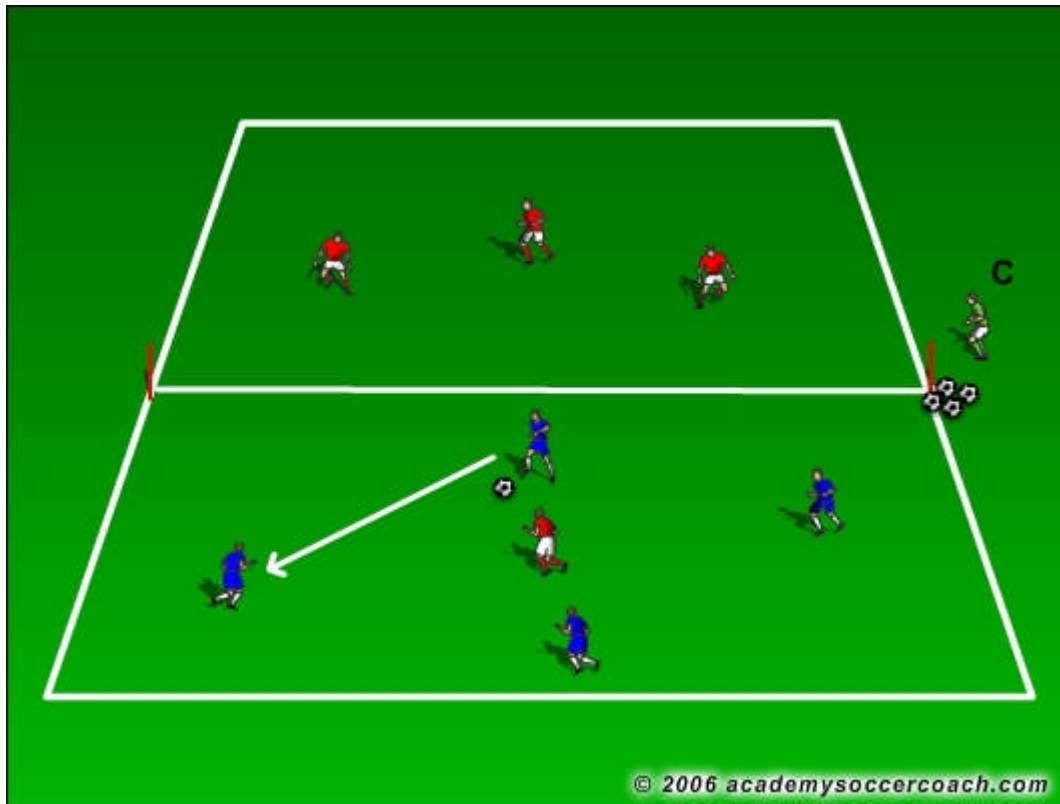
## FREE YOUR TEAM MATE



### Set up/rules

- Two teams of four players
- Each team has one player on the pitch and three players on the outside
- To start, the coach passes a ball into the pitch. the two players compete for possession
- the player who wins the ball attempts to pass out to a team mate
- if successful, the team mate enters the pitch and makes a 2v1
- the winning team is the one that has all four players on the pitch and completes 6 consecutive passes

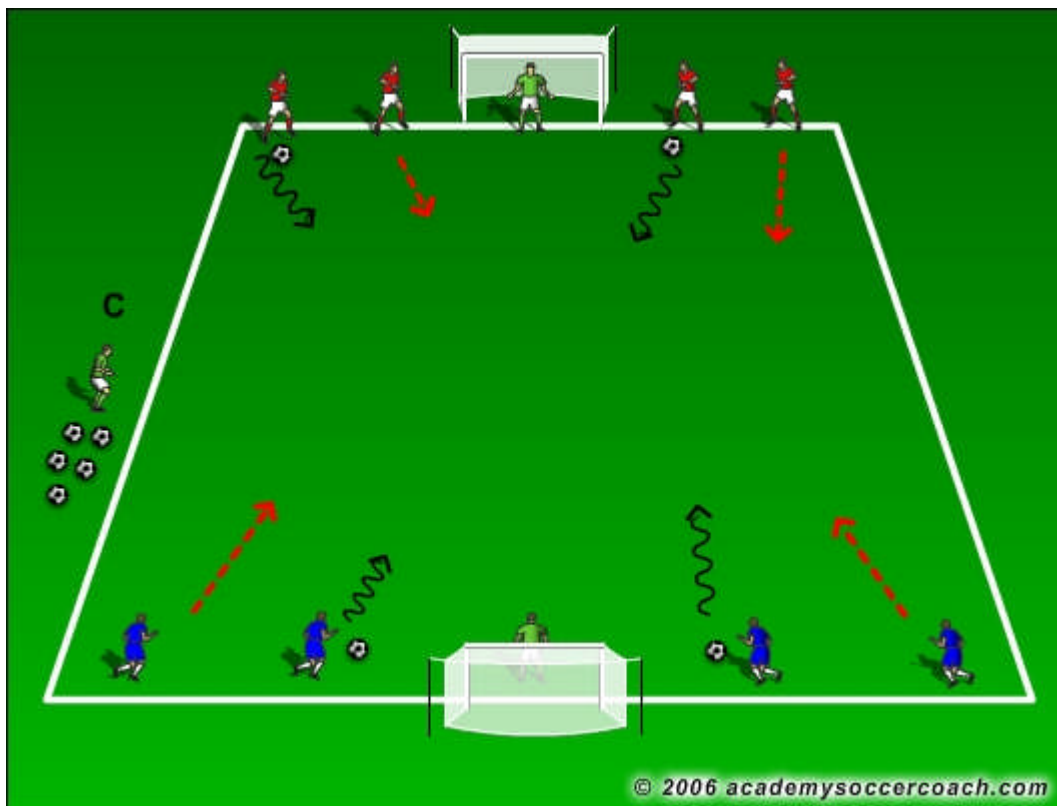
## HALF FIELD POSSESSION



### Set up/rules

- two teams of four players
- the pitch is cut into two half's , one team in each
- To start, the coach passes into one of the teams, and calls for a player to go into that half and defend
- If the team manages to make five passes, the coach calls for another player to go and defend in a 4v2
- If the ball is dispossessed then the game transfers to the opposite half and the roles are reversed
- The player guilty of losing possession must now run and defend in the other half
- The winning team is the one that has all four of their opponents in their half and manages to make 5 passes.

## MULTI BALL GAME

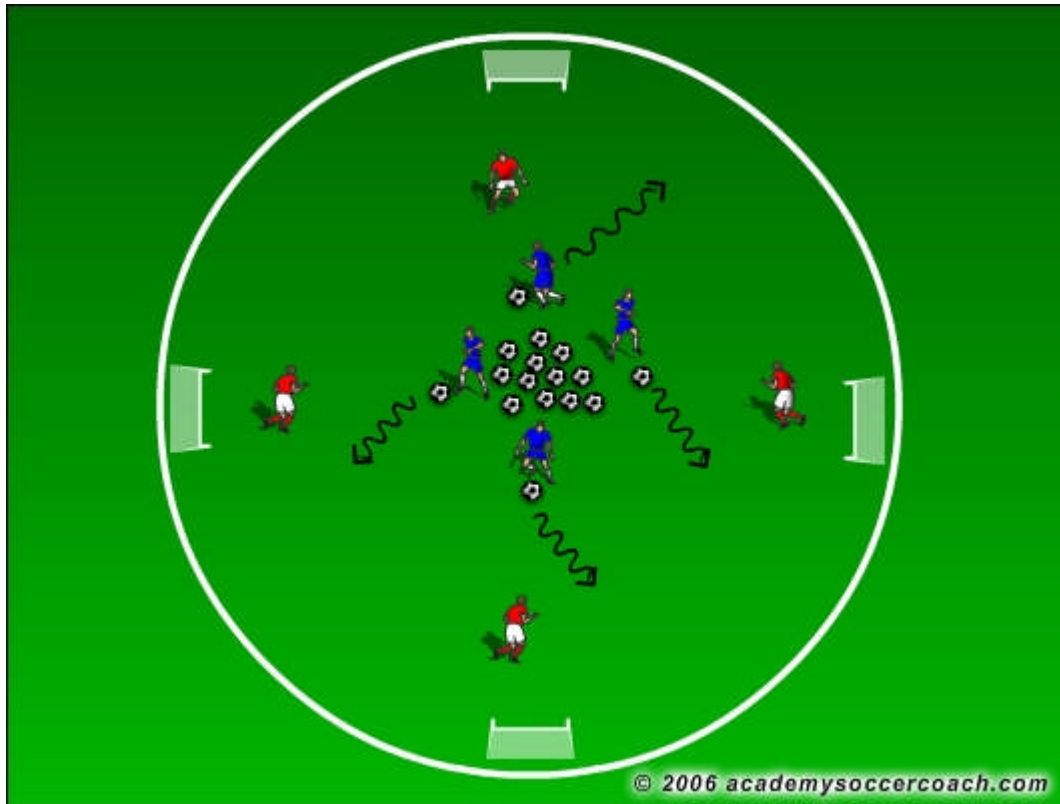


### *Set up/rules*

- two teams of four players
- two keepers
- each team has two balls
- to start, the coach blows the whistle and both teams enter the pitch
- each team has two balls to attack with but must also defend two balls
- the game continues until all four balls have left the pitch
- the coach then continues the game for a further five balls which are played one at a time
- once all five balls have been played, the coach counts the goals scored and declares the winning team

“Stick with this game. The players will soon learn to communicate as to who should defend and who should attack..The players will also learn that they must react to the next ball and quickly support their team mates”

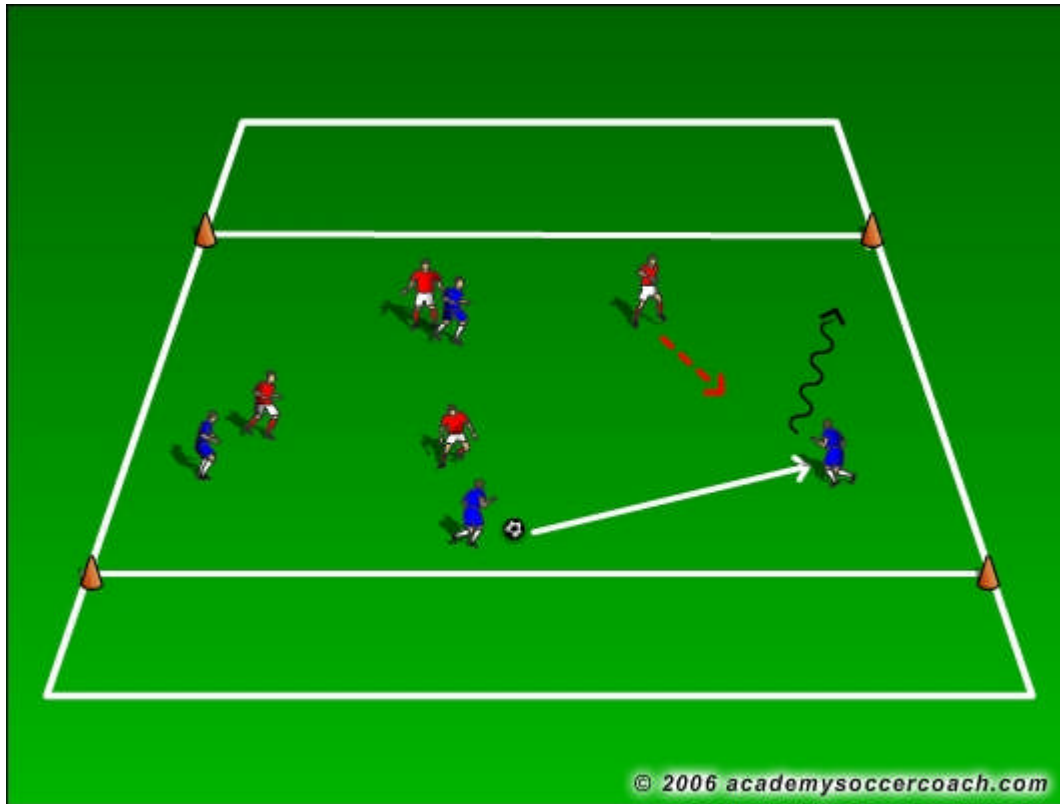
## MULTI-GOAL GAME



### Set up/rules

- two teams of four players
- four mini target goals
- a number of footballs in the centre of the pitch
- one team work as the attackers
- one team work as the defenders
- the attacking team attempt to score as many goals as possible until all the balls have been played
- the defending team must try to stop the attacking team
- To start, the attacking players have a ball each and must try to score in the mini goals. Once the ball has been played the attacking player must quickly race back to the centre and retrieve a new ball and attack again.
- The game will start with four 1v1 situations but, as the balls decrease it will become a variety of 2v1, 2v2, 3v2's etc
- Once the last ball has been played, the coach counts the goals scored and the roles are reversed for the next game

## END ZONE GAME



### Set up/rules

- two teams of four players
- the aim of this game is to dribble and stop the ball in the end zone
- the team that scores the goal, now turns and attacks the opposite end zone
- if one team is dominating the game then, the rule above can be removed enabling the opposite team to attack

## DIRECTIONAL GAME

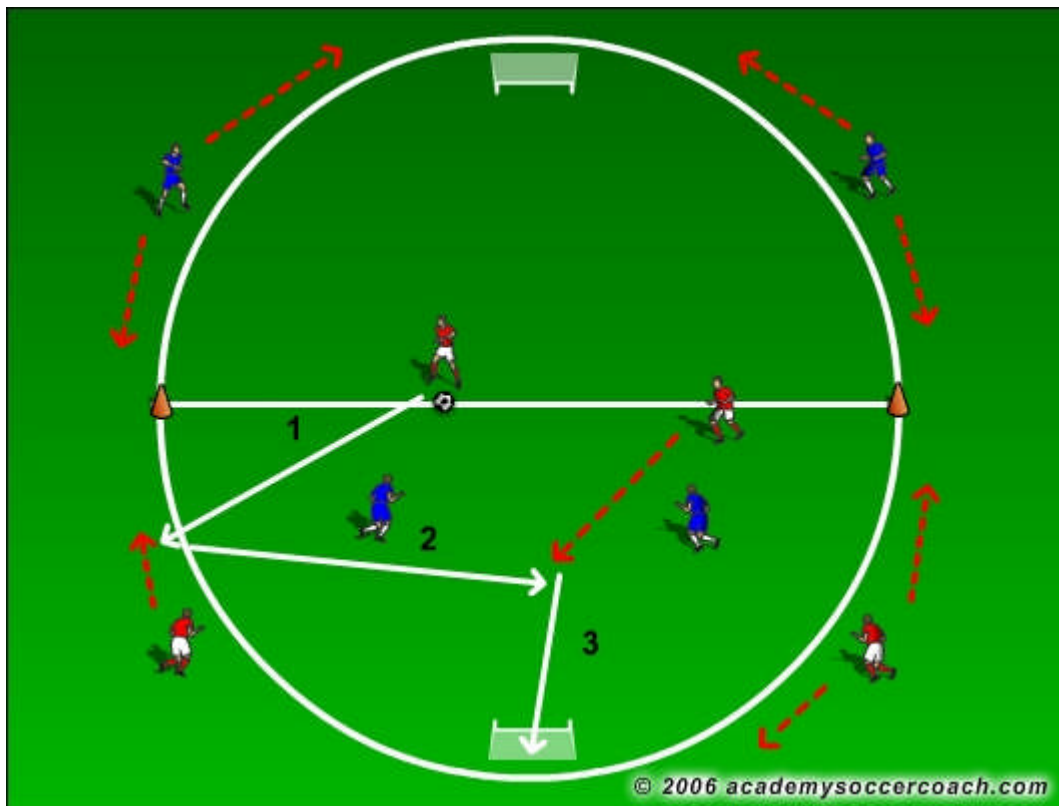


### Set up/rules

- two teams of four players
- four mini goals
- one team attack the goals across the width of the pitch
- one team attack the goals down the length of the pitch
- the game is played for a set period of time
- if a ball is scored or leaves play, the coach passes a new ball onto the pitch



## CENTRE CIRCLE GAME



### Set up/rules

- the game is played in the centre circle
- two teams of four players
- each team has two players on the pitch and two players on the outside [in the attacking half]
- the players on the outside can move up and down the side and look to receive a pass
- the outside players are only allowed to use one touch
- the game is played for four periods of two minutes
- after each period, the players on the pitch reverse roles with their team mates on the outside

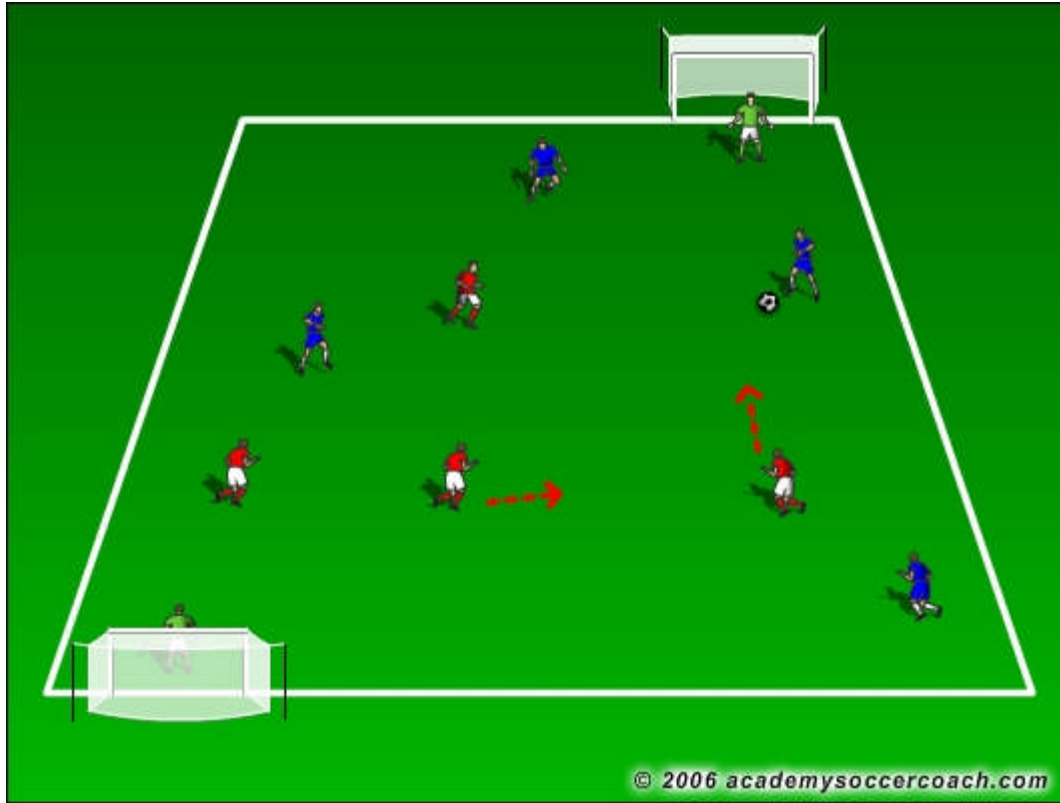
## SWITCH PLAY – ROLE REVERSAL GAME



### Set up/rules

- two teams of four players
- two full size goals
- one team acts works as defenders and has two keepers and two defenders
- one team works as the attackers and spread out to attack
- To start, the coach passes into the four attackers who attempt to score in one of goals
- If they are successful, they receive a new ball from the coach and attack again
- If the defenders manage to win the ball or stop the attackers scoring then, the roles are reversed
- The defenders now race out to receive a ball from the coach and the attackers drop back to defend
- The game continues for a set time period

## ANGLED GOALS



### Set up/rules

- two teams of four players
- two keepers
- two goals place on opposite corners of the pitch
- This practice is played as a game. It gives the players hints as to where they need to pressure and force there opponents when they are defending.
- When attacking the team in possession should look to switch the ball quickly or to use the wing and get into good crossing positions

"The game is only 11v11 in the tunnel, once the game begins it's a number of different situations made up of 1v1's, 3v2's, 4v4's....."

M Beale

## **Conclusion**

I hope this manual has been a useful resource for you and will help to develop practices that are fun and challenging for your players.

The main point to remember is that the players need to enjoy the game itself and not worry about results, leagues, competitions or a multiple of rules and regulations. As a coach, manager or teacher of the game we are always in a winning position. The players who arrive at our sessions are happy to be there and wanting to play the game. If after 15 minutes in your session the players aren't smiling and having fun then perhaps you should look at yourself rather than the kids you are coaching.

Part two of this manual is available from our website

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

The home of coach education

