



Cardiff City Academy

Small sided Syllabus
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CARDIFF CITY FOOTBALL CLUB
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Introduction

Over the years the British game has been transformed by foreign players who have come into the country to ply their trade and dazzle crowds with displays of fine touches, mesmerizing dribbling and magical presence on the ball. Best, Cantona, Henry and Ronaldo have all in their own way facilitated change in the British game and they have done so by their outstanding prowess on the ball.

Perhaps the British game has become too focused on passing and the physical side of the game, there is little doubt that the premier league is witness to some of the most frenetic paced games of football in the world, yet with the exception of Joe Cole Britain does not create expressive players on the ball whilst Holland, Portugal and Brazil seem to roll them off the international production line.

The aim of this syllabus is create an atmosphere and environment in training where our talented youngsters can find their dribbling feet, become more comfortable on the ball and express themselves. An environment where they are encouraged to be creative, problem solve and challenge themselves without fear of derision or ridicule.

Introduction

The idea of 4 vs. 4 game has long been around in football, Holland have used it from the 70's to the present day as a concrete base for their total football system, in Brazil it is all they do from the earliest age possible and Manchester United have recently adopted and developed a 4 vs. 4 syllabus for their academy groups of 9 and below.

The basic premise is a simple one; give the kids as many touches as possible in a game related environment and make it fun – this is definitely not rocket science.

Between 6 – 11 years old children are in a stage called the PMCV (Peak Motor Control /velocity) where they are basically neural sponges. All their neural pathways are growing at an exponential rate and through repetition and experimentation pathways can be encouraged to develop. Therefore between the ages of 6 – 11 children could be said to be in their 'optimal skill window', making these years a precious time to encourage skill development and technical prowess.

Introduction

The overall ethos of this syllabus is to create more 1 vs. 1 situations and facilitate the increase of game related contact time with the ball. This pack is not a definitive piece of work, the sessions in here have been put together by experimentation, watching what the kids enjoy and the reaction in their performance and attitude.

You should hopefully find this a completely sartorial pack where you are encouraged to pick and chose what you use, change the size of playing areas, experiment and devise your own conditions or practices. The emphasis here is on the promotion of player centred experimentation and expression, let them play and problem solve; encourage and reward creativity.

MN.

" Imagination is more important than knowledge. For while knowledge defines all we currently know and understand, imagination points to all we might yet discover and create."

Albert Einstein (1879-1936)

Key



- Player



- Opposition Player



- Cone



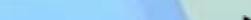
- Coned area (perimeter)



- Pass



- Dribble



- Player run (without ball)



- Pitch

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BLUE BIRDS

Warm Up

Dynamic and Session Specific

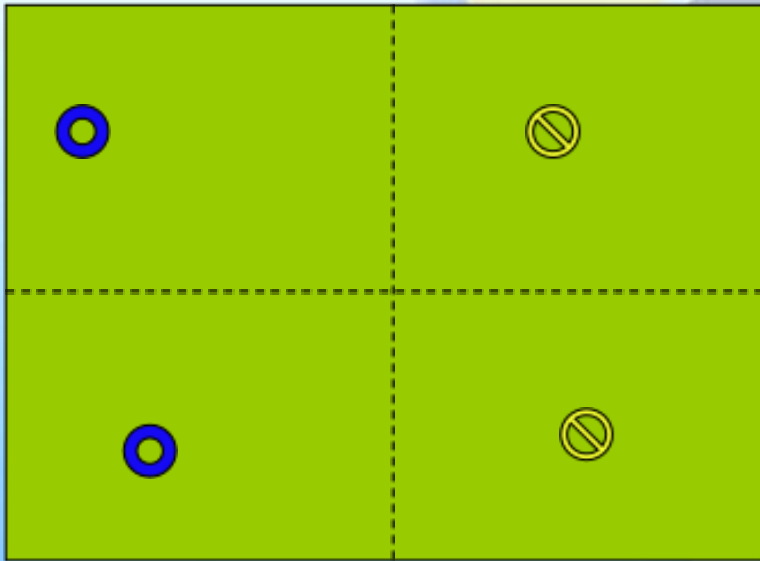
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Warm Up

Dynamic & Proprioceptive

Warm Up:

- 10m x 10m
- 1 ball per player, 1 player per 10m x 10m grid
- 3 minutes of keep ups on their own, whatever they want – try something new.
- 2 minutes below knee
- 2 minutes Can-can (left, right, left, right)
- 2 minutes Brazilian set – Right foot – outside, laces, inside – Left foot – inside, laces, outside. and back.
- 2 minutes Maradona 7 - (toe, toe, knee, knee, shoulder, shoulder, head – to feet)



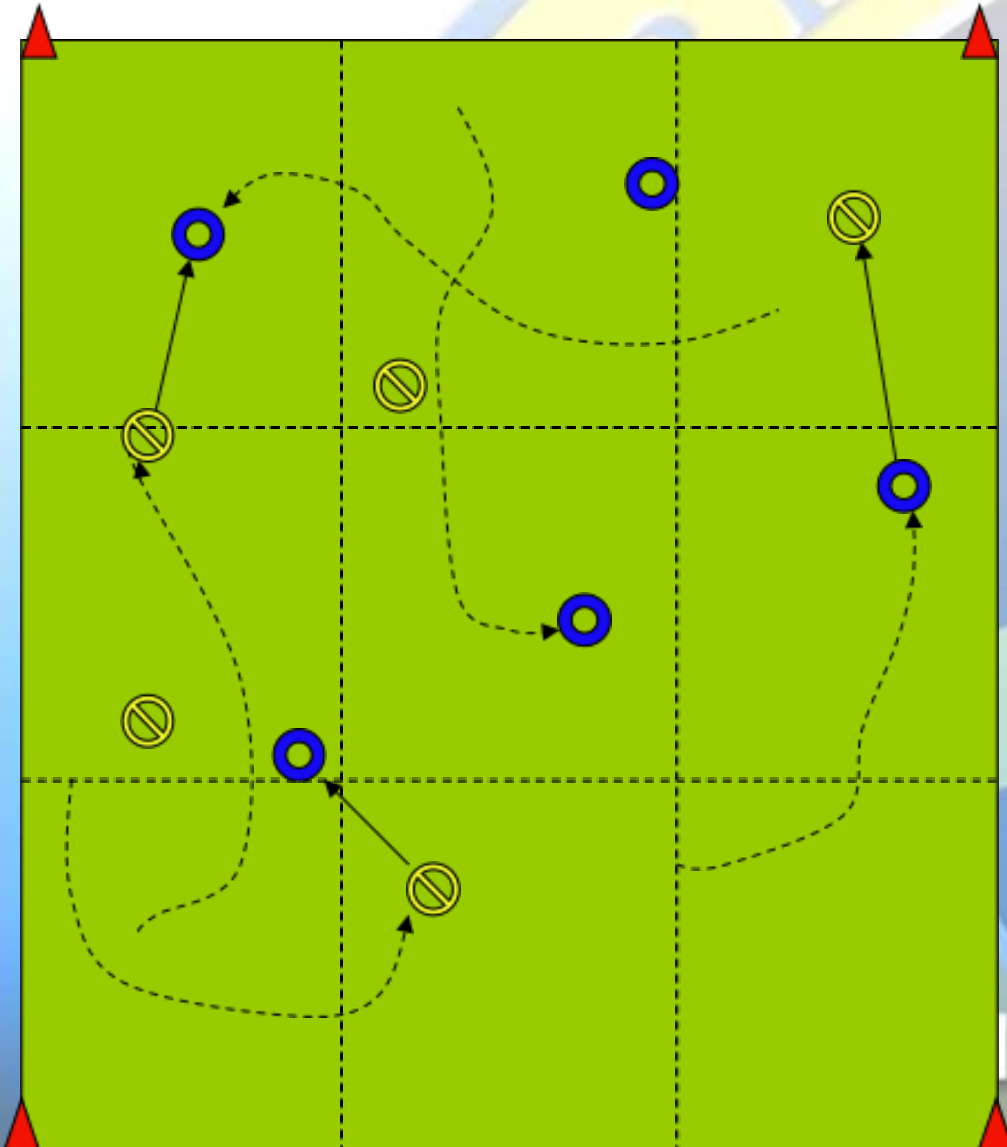
Dynamic & Proprioceptive

Dynamic Flex/ Proprioception:

- Use 4 – 6 grids (20m x 20m – 30m).
- 1 ball per 2 players
- Start of players moving around grid passing the ball with chest pass (must put a name on the pass – communication)
- On reception of ball player must put ball behind head like taking a throw then touch ball onto each knee twice (alternate)
- As above but to the inside of foot
- As above but to the outside of foot
- As above but to toes (straight legs)
- On reception of the pass player must lift knee as high as possible and pass ball under leg to other hand (both legs x2)

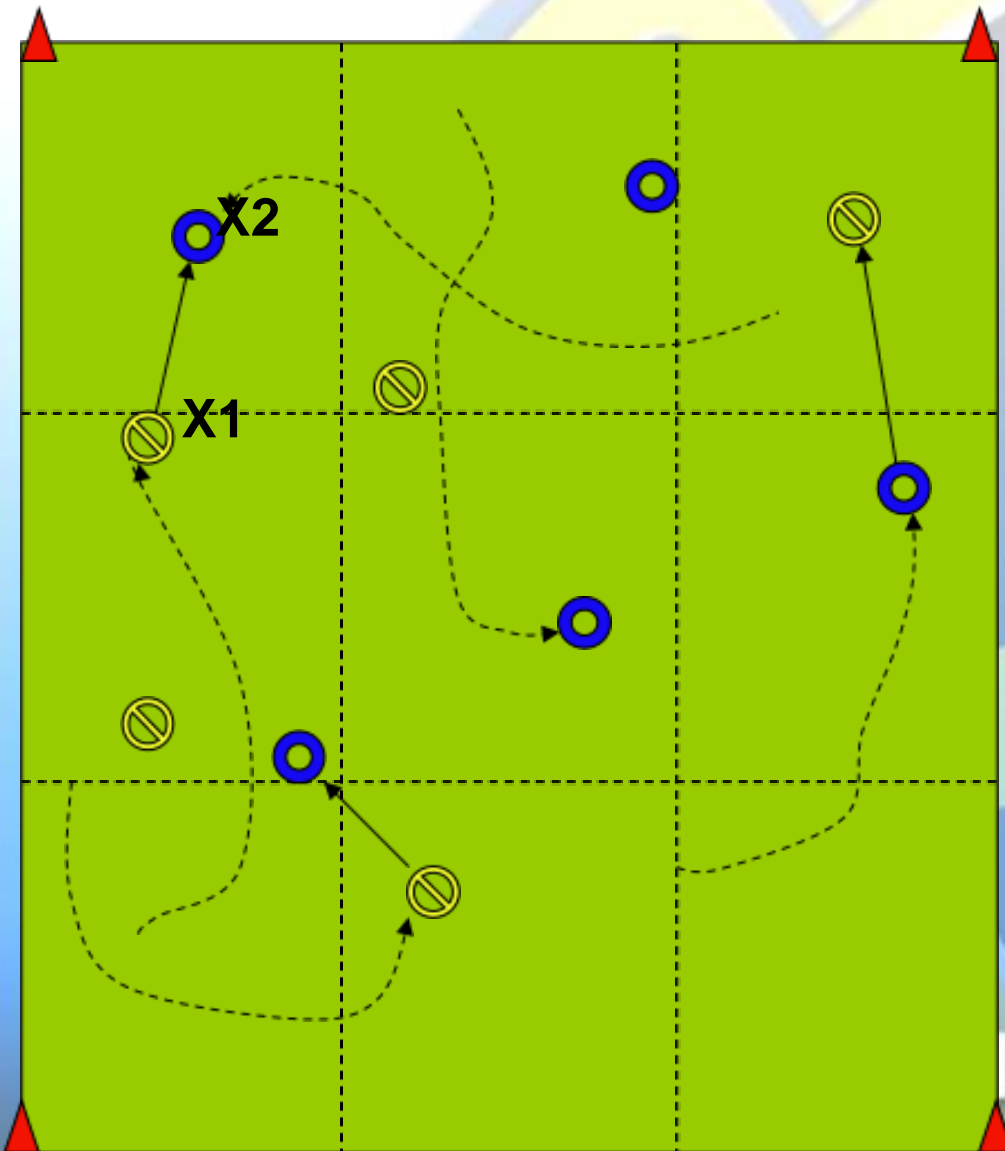
Progression:

Vary throwing technique/ behind back/ under leg/ quarterback throw/ loop shot



Warm Up

Dynamic & Proprioceptive



Dynamic Proprioception:

- X1 calls X2 and serves (from hands) X2 for a volley. X2 volleys ball to X1 who volleys back and X2 catches and finds another player to volley with.
- As above but this time X1 serves to chest, X2 controls then volleys back to X1's chest who controls and volleys back to X2. X2 finds another player to volley with.
- X1 calls X2 and serves for a defensive header, X2 heads to X1 who heads back and X2 repeats the process with another player.
- Make your own Proprioceptive combinations... alternate feet/ different parts of the body... **Be Creative.**



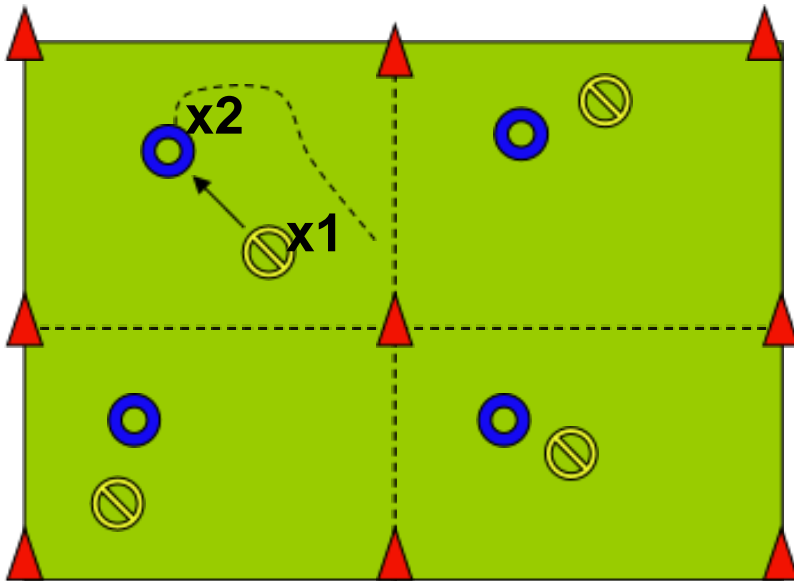
BLUE BIRDS

1 vs. 1

Individual control, creativity and confidence on
the ball

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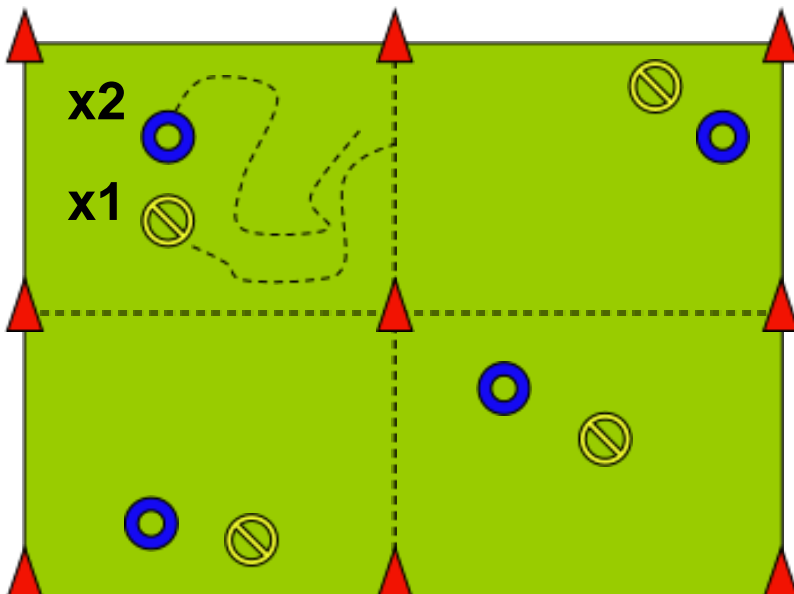
1 vs. 1



Leg Goals

- Grids 10m x 10m – As many as desired
- In pairs, one player with ball. X1 has ball and must dribble ball around grid trying to kick it into the legs of X2. X2 must avoid by using quick feet.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue players round.

Coaching Points: Quick feet, agility, feints (dummies)



Keep Ball

- Grids as above.
- X1 dribbles the ball and tries to shield the ball from X2 who must either put the ball out of play or regain possession for a point.
- 3 attempts each then again rotate the blue players

Coaching Points: Shield the ball, body position, strength

1 vs. 1



Line Goal (1 vs. 1)

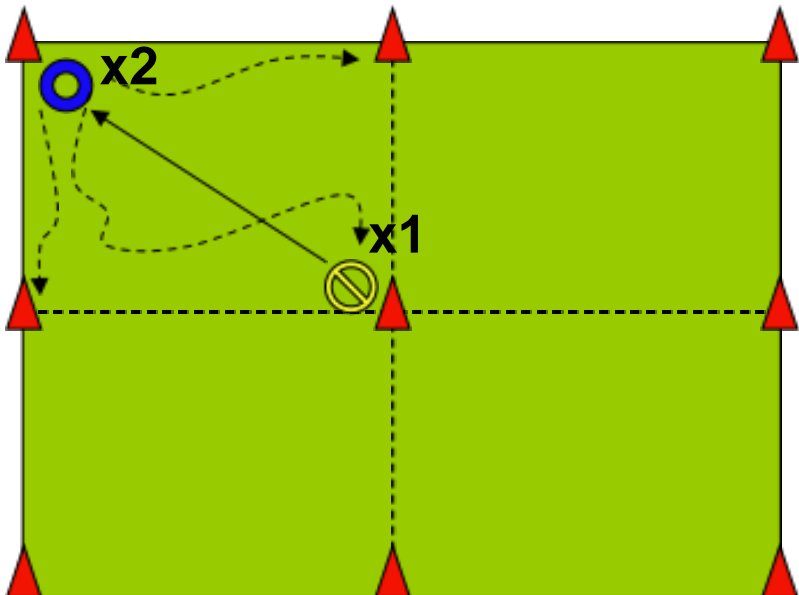
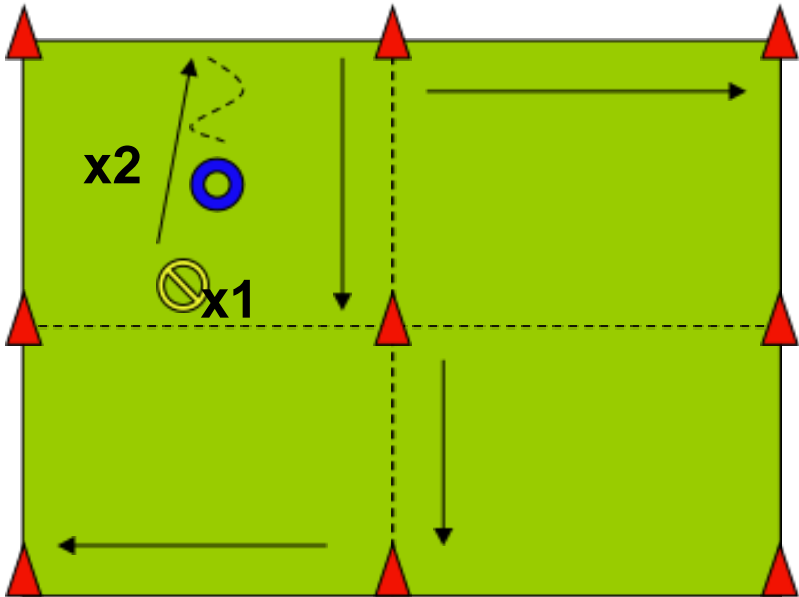
- 10m x 10m – As many as desired
- X1 Passes ball to X2 who must then try to beat X1 and score a point by stopping the ball on the opposite line
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue players
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' / reward skill & creativity

Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints dummies – try something new.

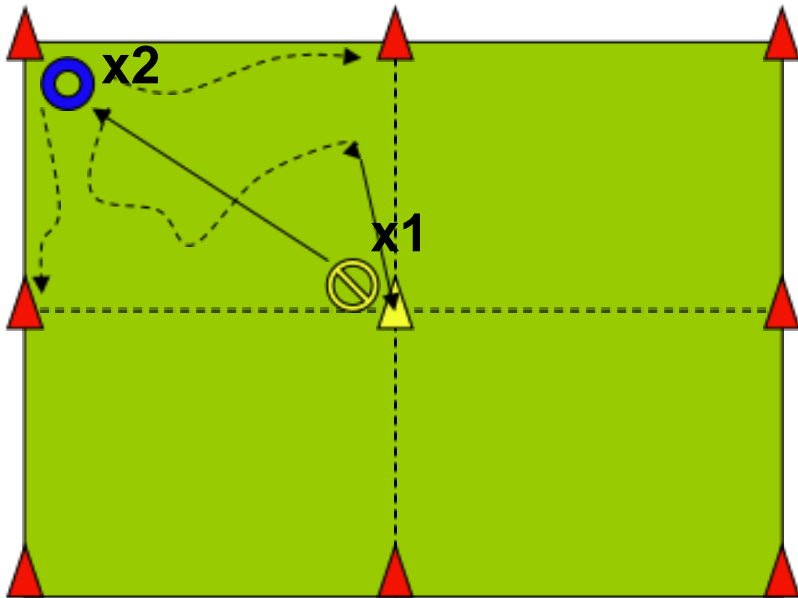
3 Way Goals

- 10m x 10m – As many as desired
- X1 passes to X2 who then has to beat X1 to either of the 3 corners. 1 point to corner goals 3 points for the goal behind the defenders starting position.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue players
- Extra points for nutmegs / reward skill & creativity

Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints dummies – try something new.



1 vs. 1



- **3 Way Goals – Progression**
- As Before with the exception that the player attacking can now beat their player and score by knocking over the cone behind the defender
- Emphasis on beating player and creating space for a pass

1 vs. 1- Proprioception Games

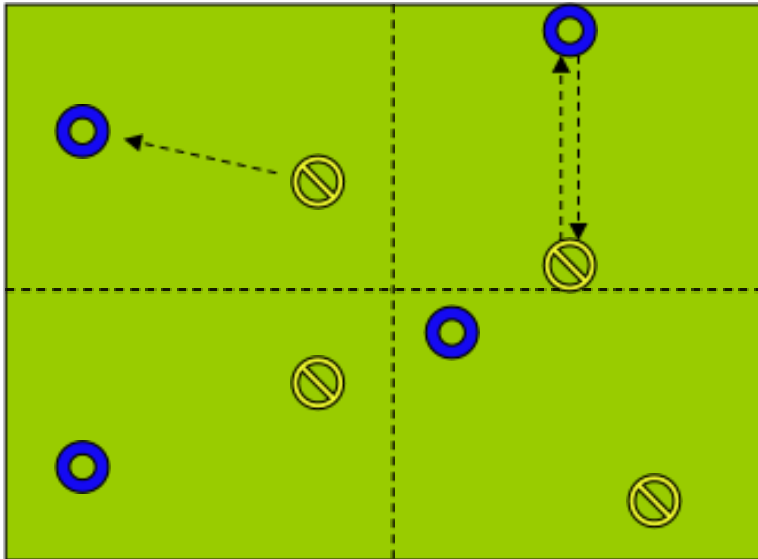


2- Touch Keep Up:

- 10m x 10m – As many as desired
- Players must keep the ball up between themselves in pairs. They must have 2 touches whilst keeping the ball in the grid.
- Encourage competition – last not to let the ball drop most keep ups

Progressions:

- On call blue players rotate clockwise whilst yellows must keep the ball up with 2 touches
- Larger distance between players
- Half volleys (1 touch)
- Headers (1 touch)
- Alternate Feet (2 touch)
- 1 touch stitch up – passing, start slow and build up speed
- Individual:
- Maradona 7 - (toe, toe, knee, knee, shoulder, shoulder, head – to feet)





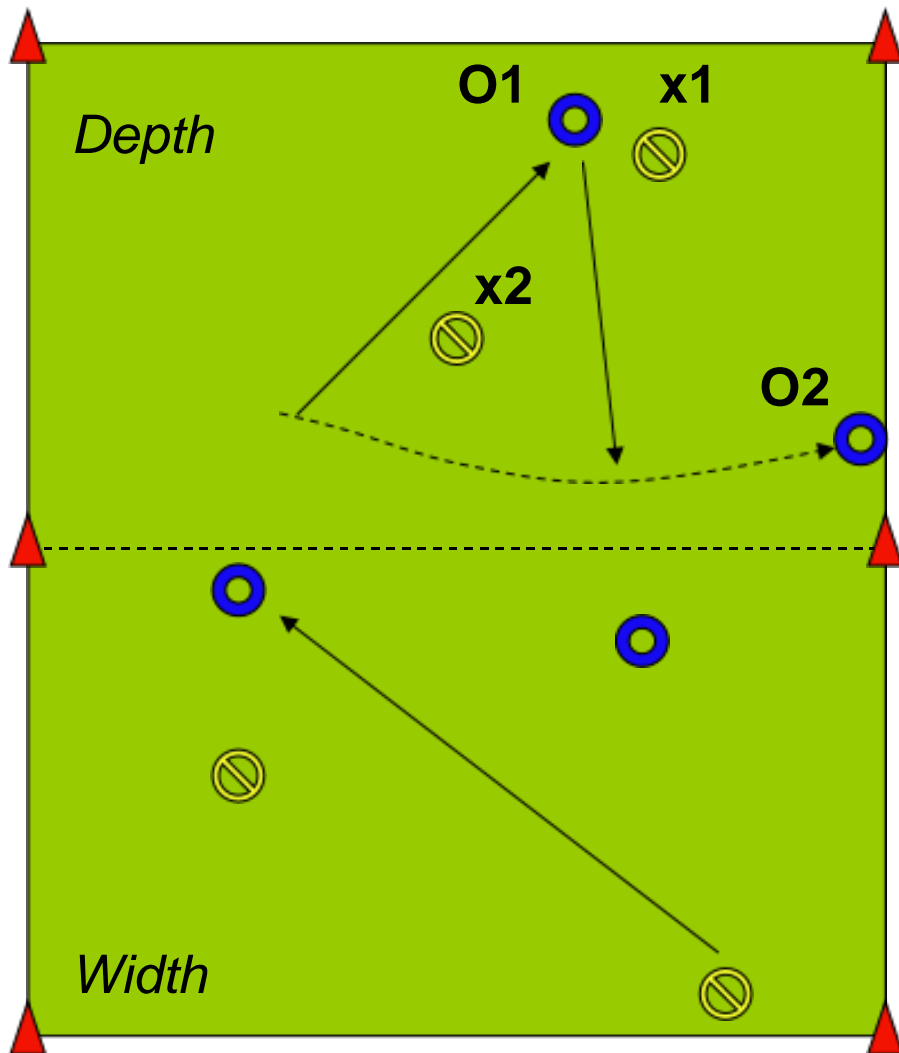
BLUEBIRDS

2 vs. 2

Using individual flair and working as a pair to
create and exploit space

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2 vs. 2



Line Goal (2 vs. 2)

- 10m x 20m – As many as desired
- X1 Passes ball to O2 who with O1, must then try to beat X1, X2 and score a point by stopping the ball on the opposite line
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue pairs
- Can either play with depth (for channel play) or with width (to encourage space)
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' / reward skill & creativity

Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a pair to create space.



- ### Coaching Points

- 1st touch out of feet into the space which you are going to attack. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space – be clever/ try something new.

2 vs. 2

Small Goal (2 vs. 2)

- 10m x 20m – As many as desired

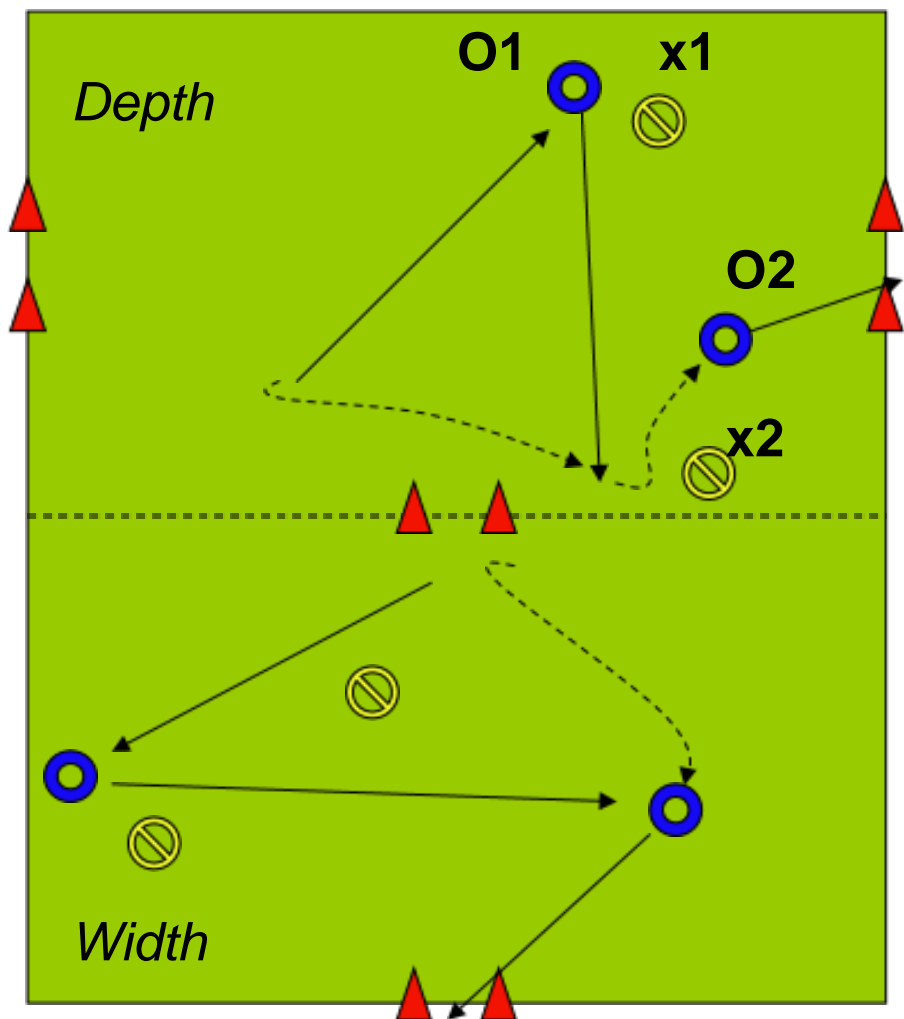


- X1 Passes ball to O2 who must then try to beat X1, X2 and score a point by passing the ball through the small goals
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue pairs
- Can either play with depth (for channel play) or with width (to encourage space)
- Extra points for nutmegs / overlaps/ tricks - reward skill & creativity

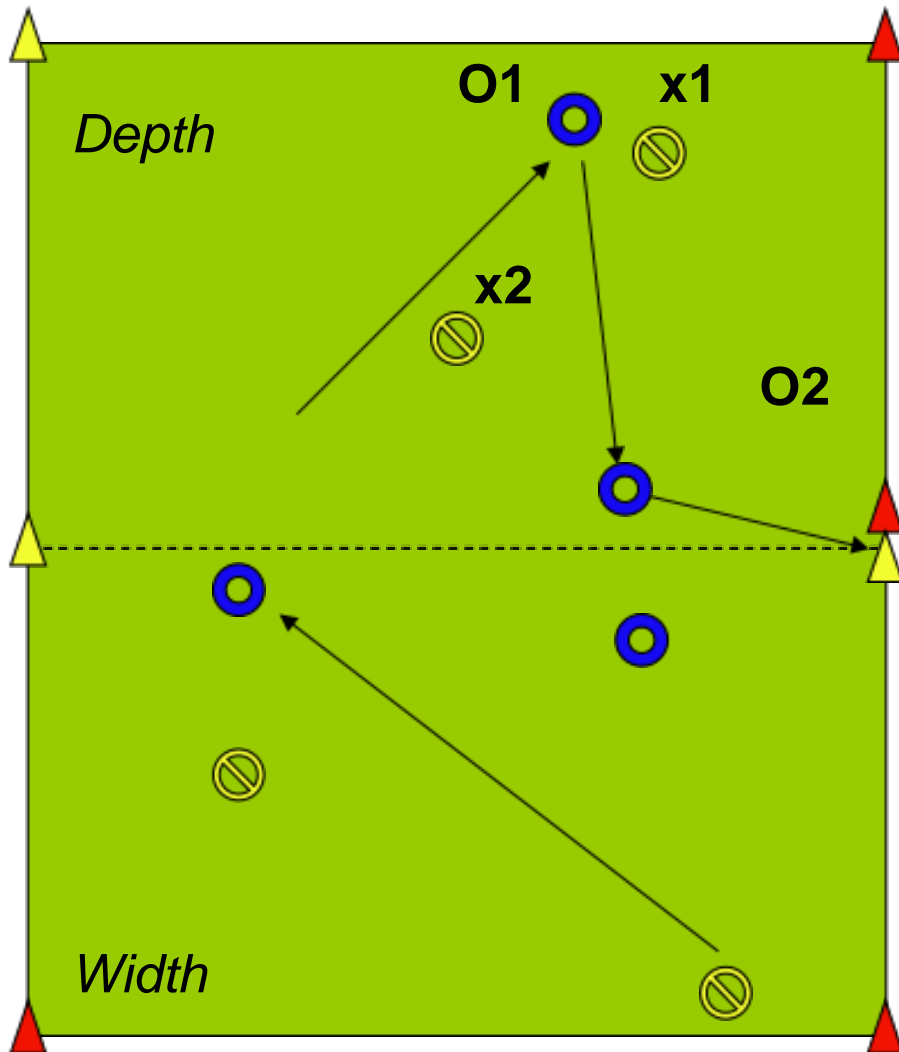
Progressions:

- Dribble through goals to score.

Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a pair to create space and options.



2 vs. 2



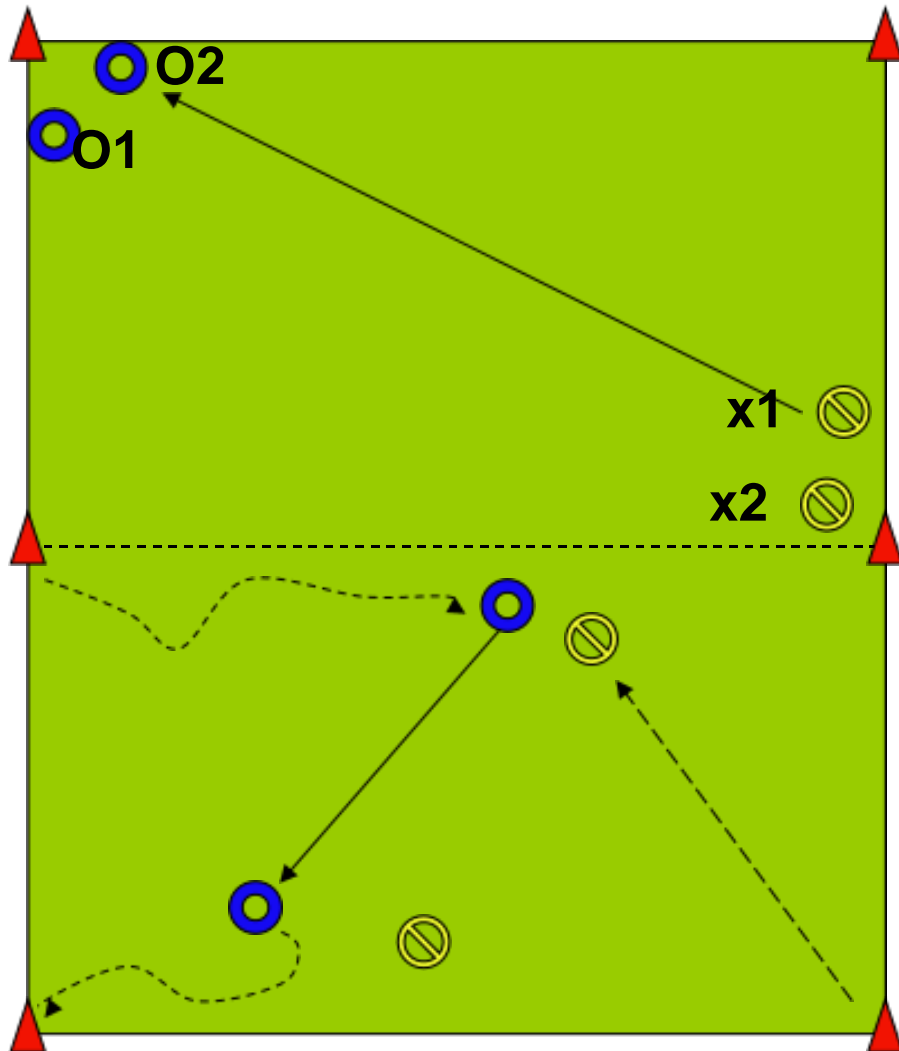
Cones to Score (2 vs. 2)

(Basis for switching play)

10m x 20m – As many as desired

- X1 Passes ball to O2 who with O1 must then try to beat X1, X2 and score a point by passing the ball into either of the corner cones and knocking them over.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue pairs
- Can either play with depth (for channel play) or with width (to encourage space).
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' / reward skill & creativity
- Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a pair to create space and options.

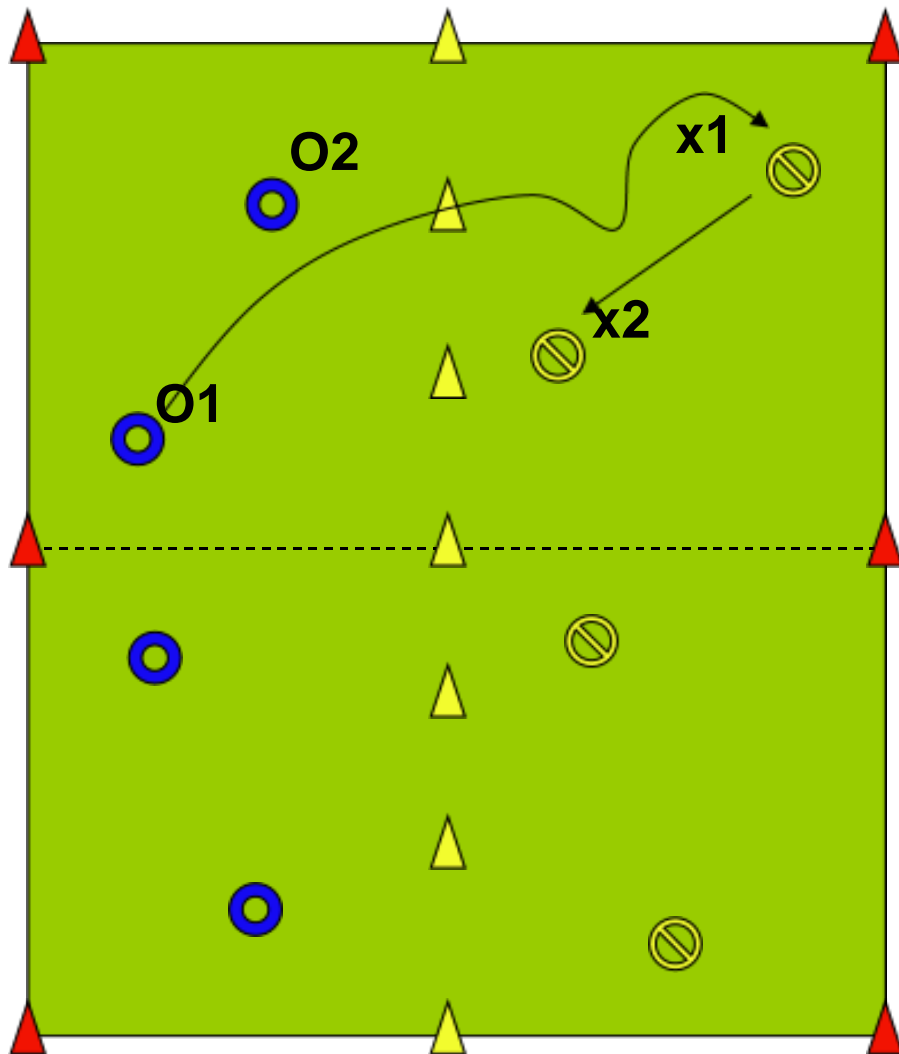
2 vs. 2



3 Way Goals

- 20m x 10m – As many as desired
- X1 passes to O2 who with O1, must then beat X1 and X2 to either of the 3 corners. 1 point to corner goals, 3 points for the goals behind defenders.
- 3 points for the goal behind defenders starting position.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue players
- Extra points for nutmegs / reward skill & creativity
- Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints dummies. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space – try something new.

2 vs. 2 – Proprioception games



Head Tennis:



- 10m x 20m – As many as desired
- In pairs players must play the ball over the 'net' to the opposition
- The ball may only bounce once on each side. Teams can only score point when it is their serve, winner retains serve – 1st to 5 wins.
- Rotate pairs after a winner.

Progressions:

- Limit touches
- Only pass across with a particular part of body (i.e. head, inside of foot, left foot)

Note:

This game is particularly good for keeping subs engaged during match days. Promotes 1st touch and engages players mentally.



BLUE BIRDS

3 vs. 3/ 4 vs. 3

Creating 'Pockets' or 'snippets' of game play

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3 vs. 3

Line Goal (3 vs. 3/ 4 vs. 3)

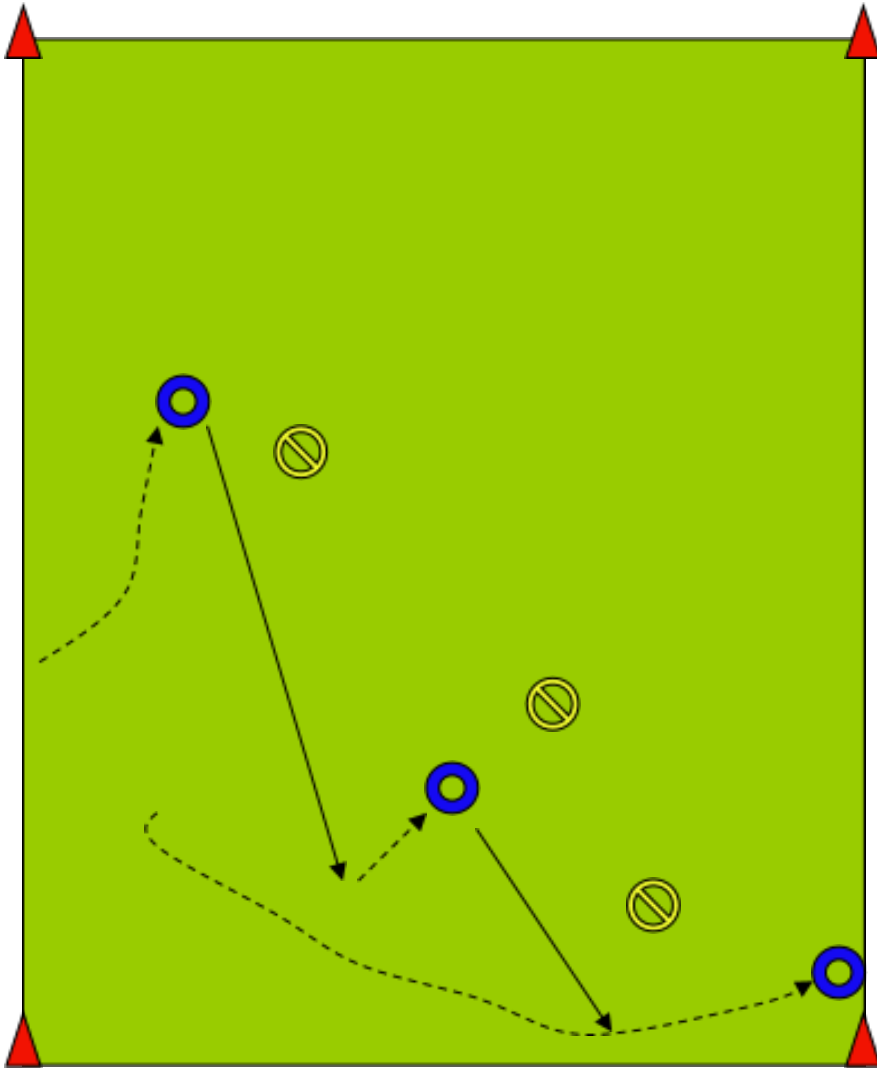


- 20m x 20m grid – As many as desired
- Both teams start on opposite goal lines. Yellows pass to blues who must then score by dribbling the ball and stopping it on the goal line.
- 3 attempts each then rotate teams.
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' and skills – reward creativity

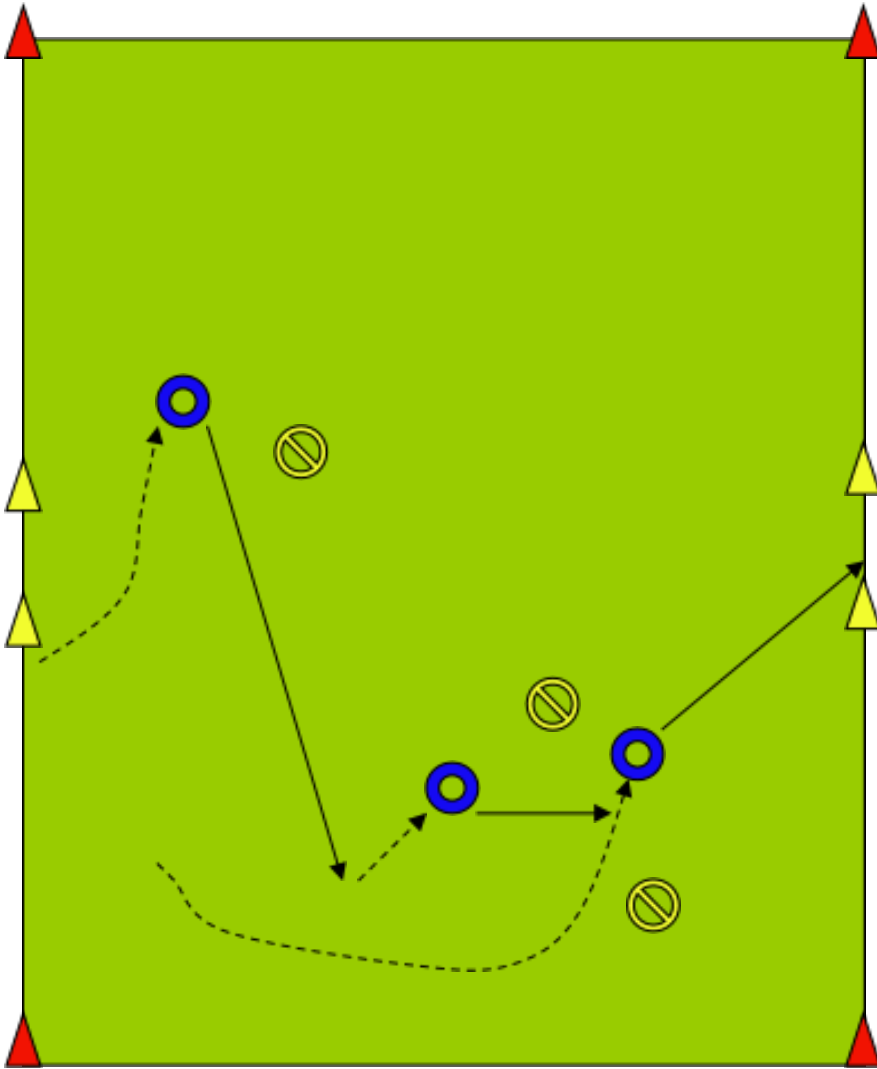
Progressions:

- Team who scores must then get to the others side for double points. Continue until they lose possession, then restart in normal manner.
- 4 vs. 3 – the 3 must play keep ball for as long as possible whilst the 4 must steal and score in the normal manner.

Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a unit to create space and options.



3 vs. 3



Small Goal game (3 vs. 3):

- 20m x 20m – As many as desired
- Yellow team passes to blue team and blues must score by passing the balls through the small goals.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue teams
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' / reward skill & creativity
- Progressions:
- Dribble through goals to score.
- Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a unit to create space and options.

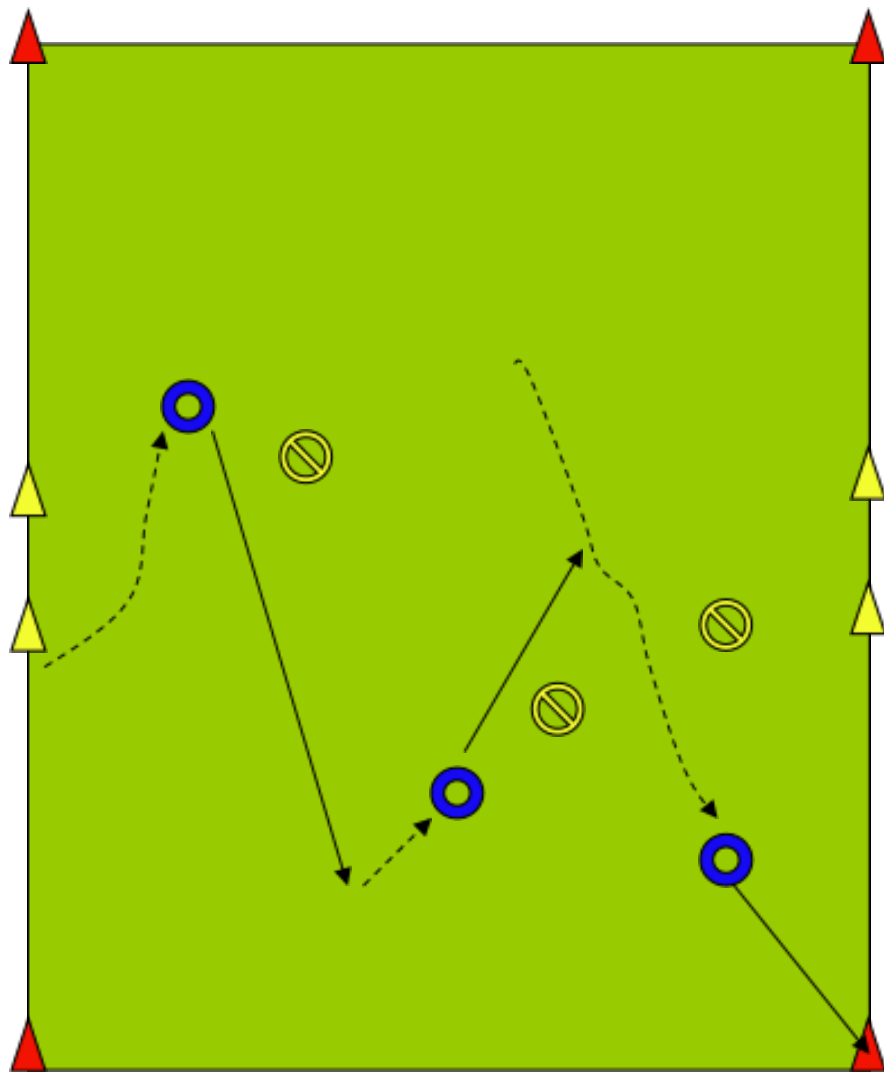
3 vs. 3



Small Goal game (3 vs. 3) - Progression:

(switching play option)

- 20m x 20m – As many as desired
- Yellow team passes to blue team and blues must score by either dribbling the ball through the small goals for 2 points or by 'passing' the ball and knocking over one of the cones in the corners for 1 point.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue teams
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' / reward skill & creativity
- Progression: Change the 'pass' to a dribble to score in the central goals.



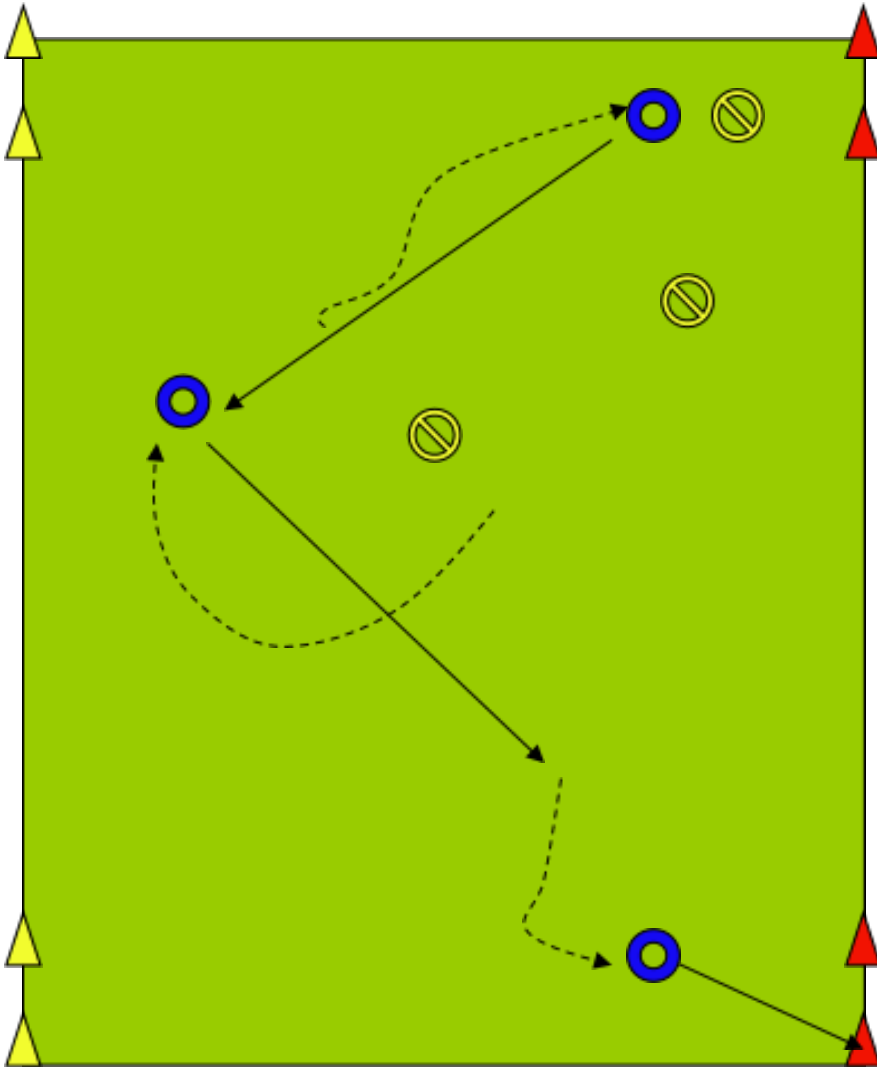
Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a unit to create space and options.

3 vs. 3



Four Goal Game (Switch of Play):

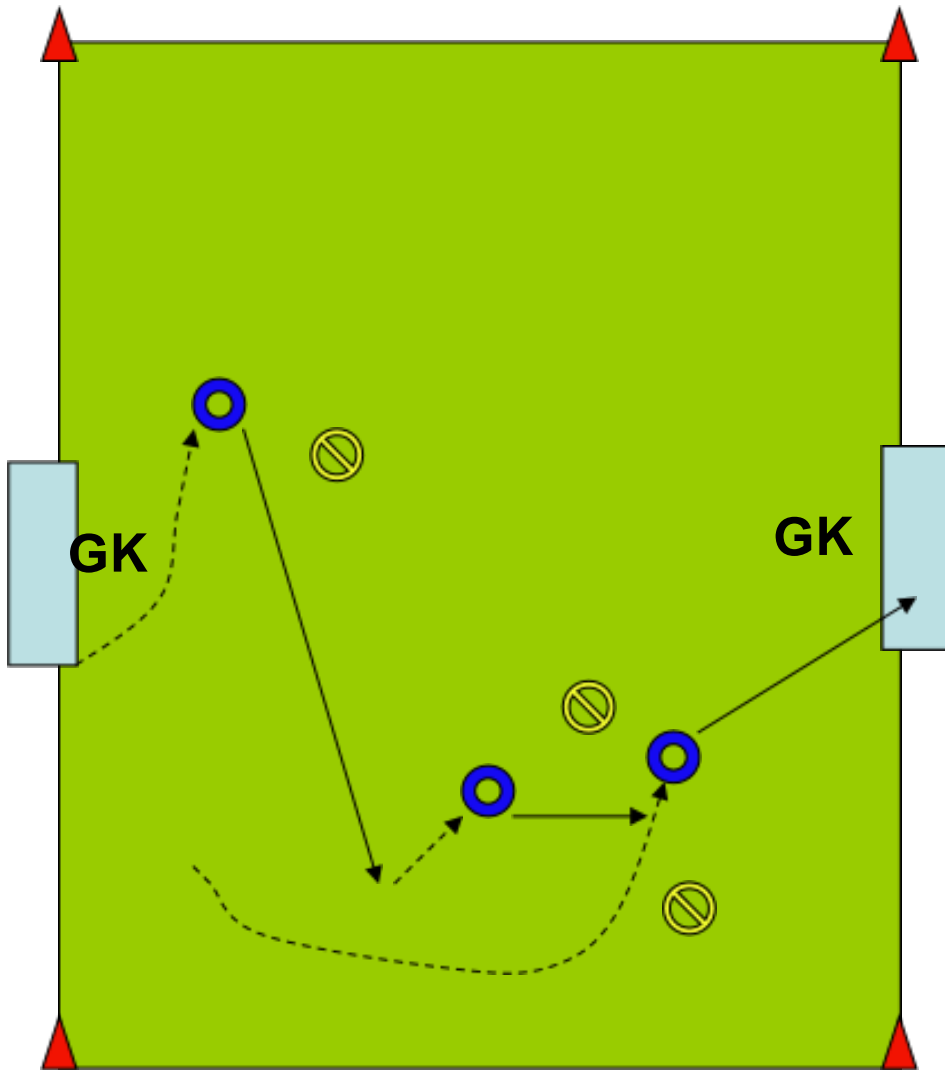
- 20m x 20m – As many as desired
- Both teams start on goal line. Yellows pass to blues who must then score by passing into either of the goals in the corners.
- If defenders steal ball they can score for double points.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue team
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' / reward skill & creativity



Progressions:

- Dribble through goals to score.
- Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Commit player by putting him on the back foot. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a unit to create space and options. Can players beat a player in wide areas to score.

3 vs. 3



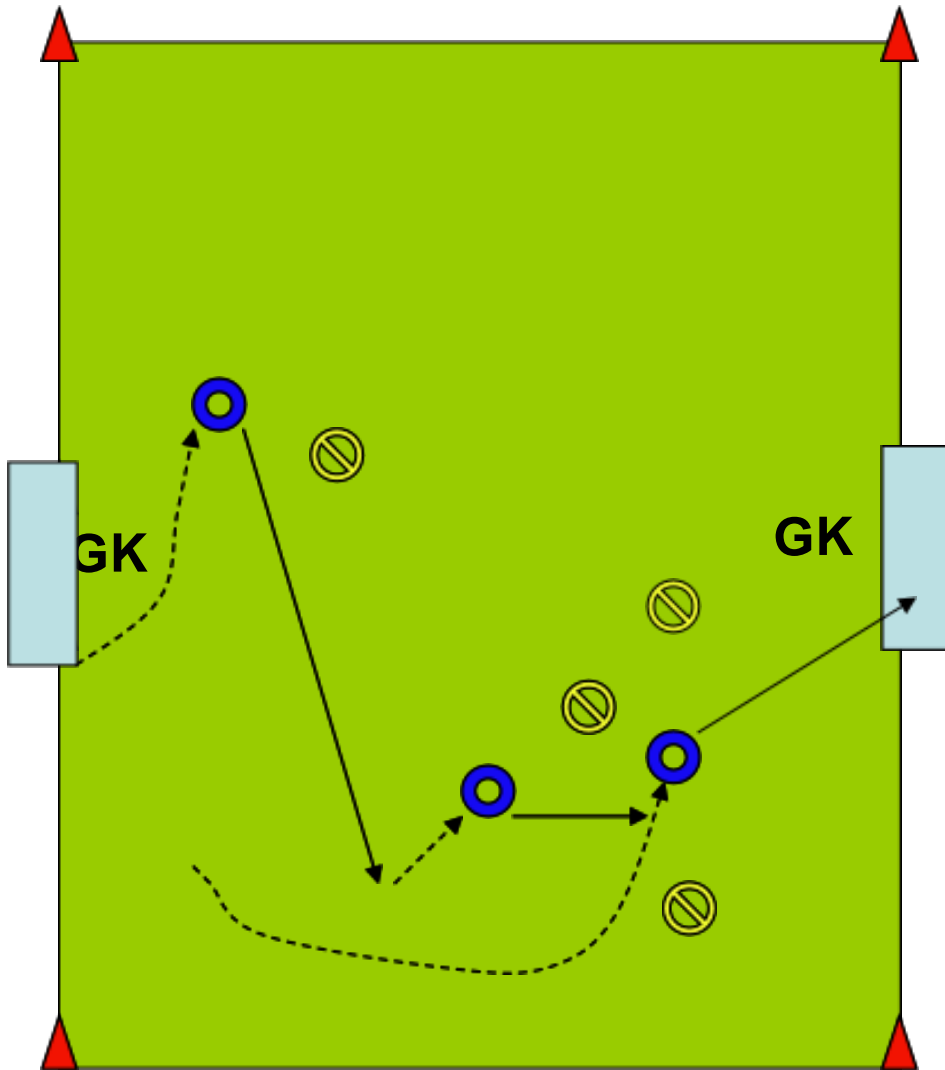
Goalkeeper Game (3 vs. 3):

- 25m x 30m – As many as desired
- Normal game play. To start the game both keepers have a ball in their hand. The coach will then call the colour of the team which is to start the match. The other keeper must quickly put their own ball in their net.
- Once a goal has been scored the keeper who concedes starts with a throw out.
- First to 5 goals wins – rotate teams. (max game time is 8 minutes)
- Extra points for skills/ tricks – reward creativity

Coaching Points:

- Movement off the ball to create space/ Try something new, be confident – make space for the shot then get your shots off quickly.
- Loads of goals....loads of **FUN!!**

3 vs. 3



Goalkeeper Game (4 vs. 3) - Progressions:

- 25m x 30m – As many as desired
- Double points for 3 sided team and half points for team of 4 – first to 4 wins.
- Team of 4 can score in either goal and team of 3 must defend for 2 minutes. Rotate players in each team to ensure all get a go at both tasks.
- Keepers can score.



BLUE BIRDS

4 vs. 4

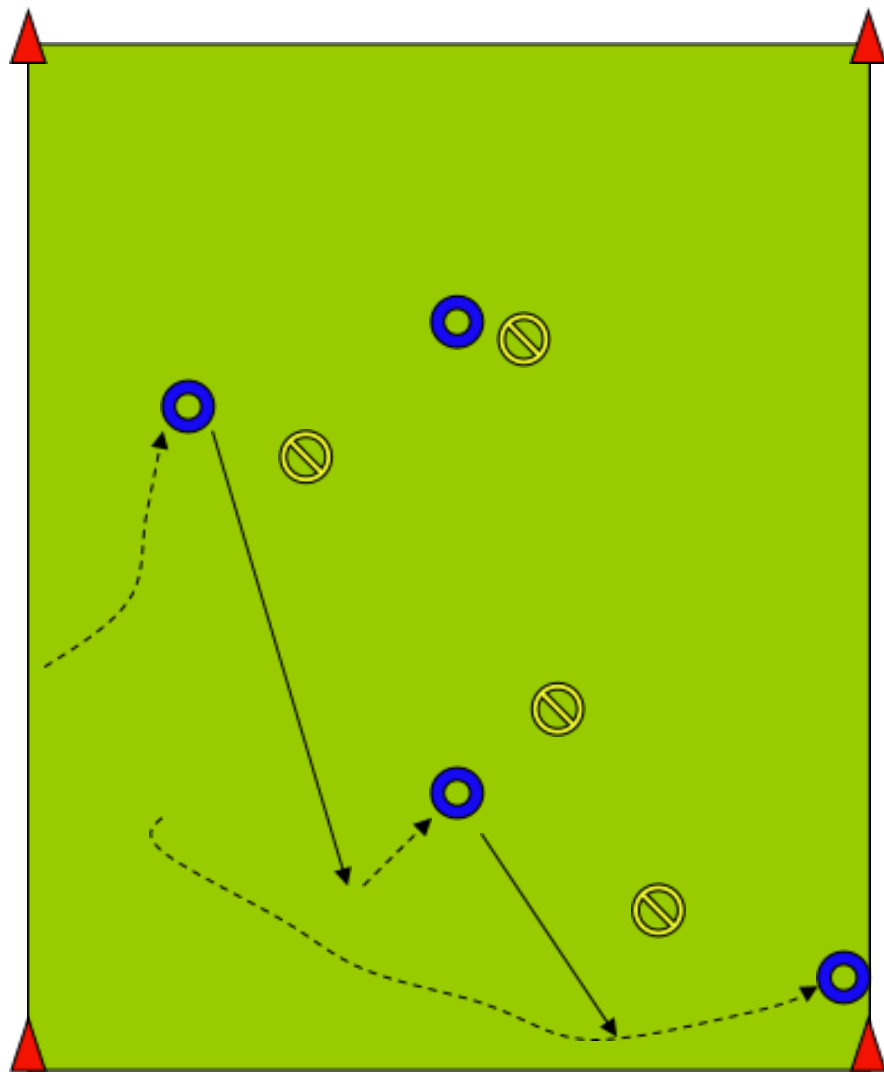
Conditioned games that promote aspects of
functional play

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4 vs. 4

Line Goal:

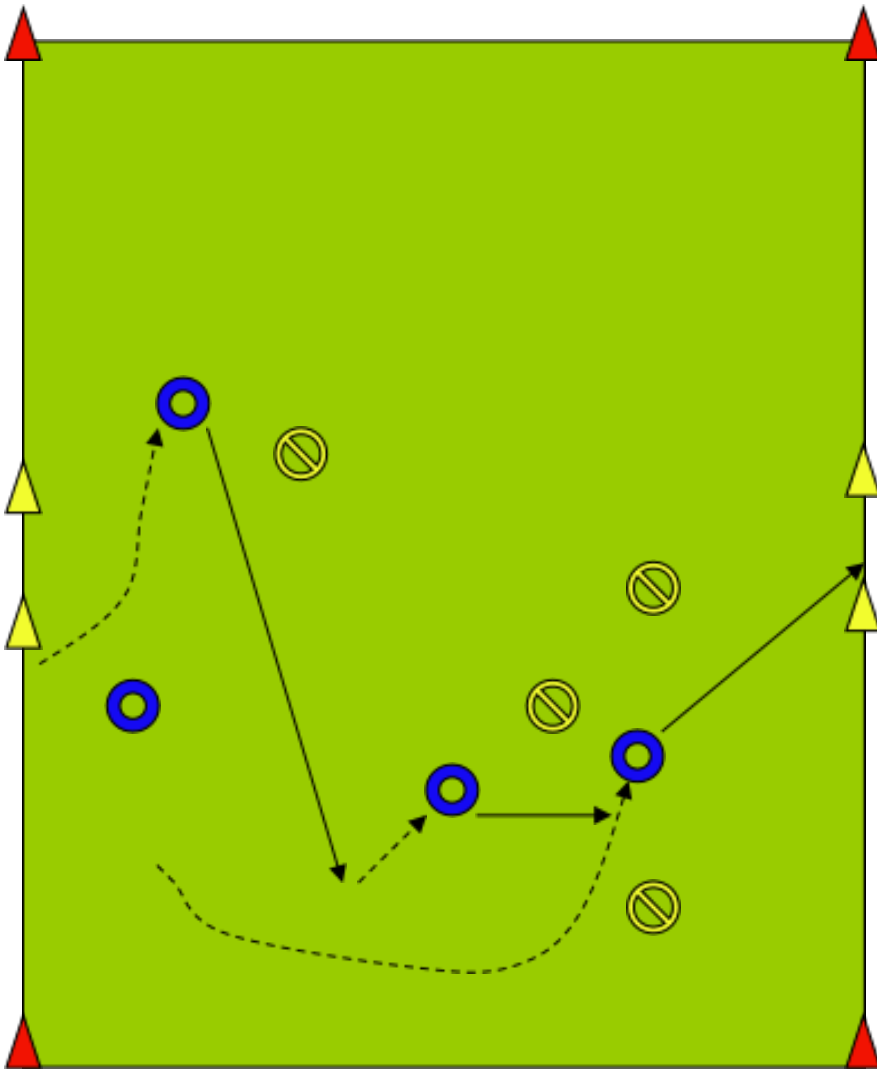
- 25m x 20m grid – As many as desired
- Both teams start on opposite goal lines. Yellows pass to blues who must then score by dribbling the ball and stopping it on the goal line.
- 3 attempts each then rotate teams.
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' and skills – reward creativity



Progressions:

- Team who scores must then get to the others side for double points. Continue until scoring team loses possession, then other team restart in normal manner.
- Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, attack the space in front of you. Feints, dummies – try something new. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a unit to create space and options.

4 vs. 4



Small Goal game :

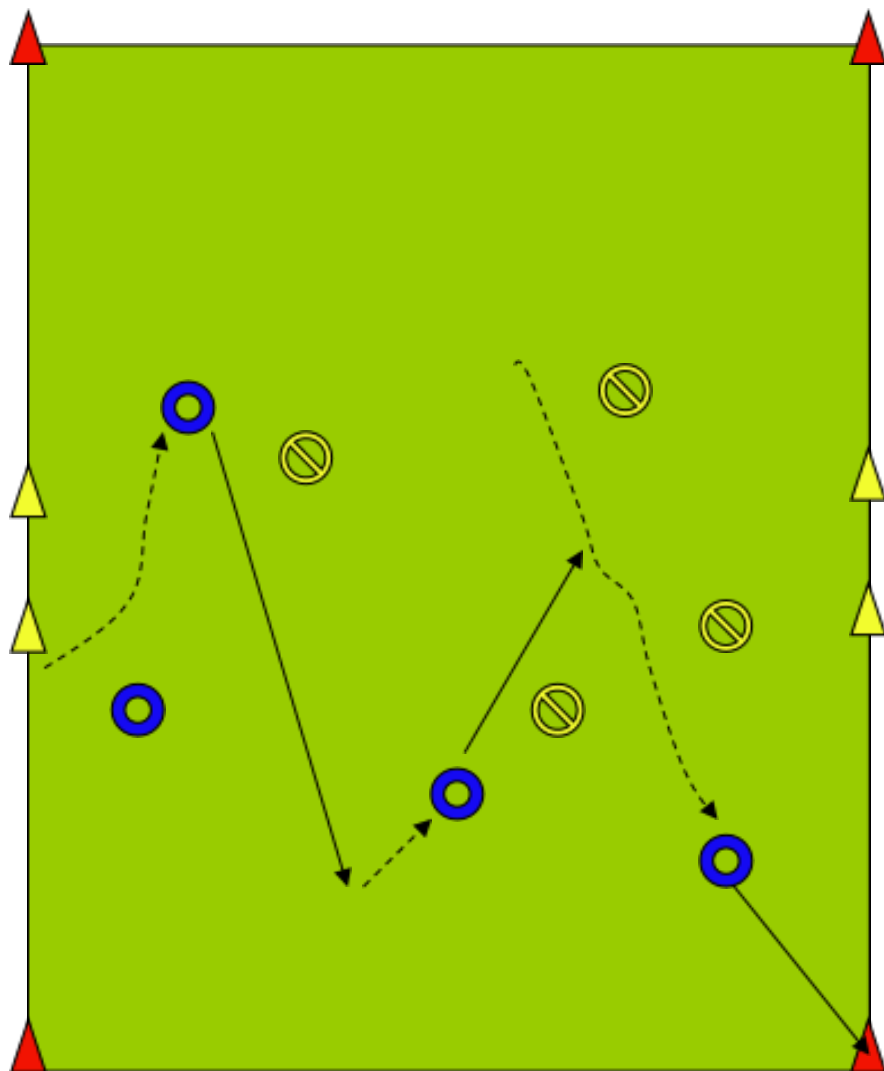
- 30m x 25m – As many as desired
- Yellow team passes to blue team and blues must score by passing the balls through the small goals.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue teams
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' / reward skill & creativity

Progressions:

- Dribble through goals to score.

Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a unit to create space and options.

4 vs. 4



- **Small Goal game - Progression:**
(switching play option)

- 30m x 25m – As many as desired
- Yellow team passes to blue team and blues must score by either dribbling the ball through the small goals for 1 point or by ‘passing’ the ball and knocking over one of the cones in the corners for 2 points.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue teams
- Extra points for ‘nutmegs’ / reward skill & creativity

Coaching Points: 1st touch out of your feet, feints, dummies – try something new. Movement off the ball to create space/ Work as a unit to create space and options.

4 vs. 4

Four Goal Game (Switch of Play):



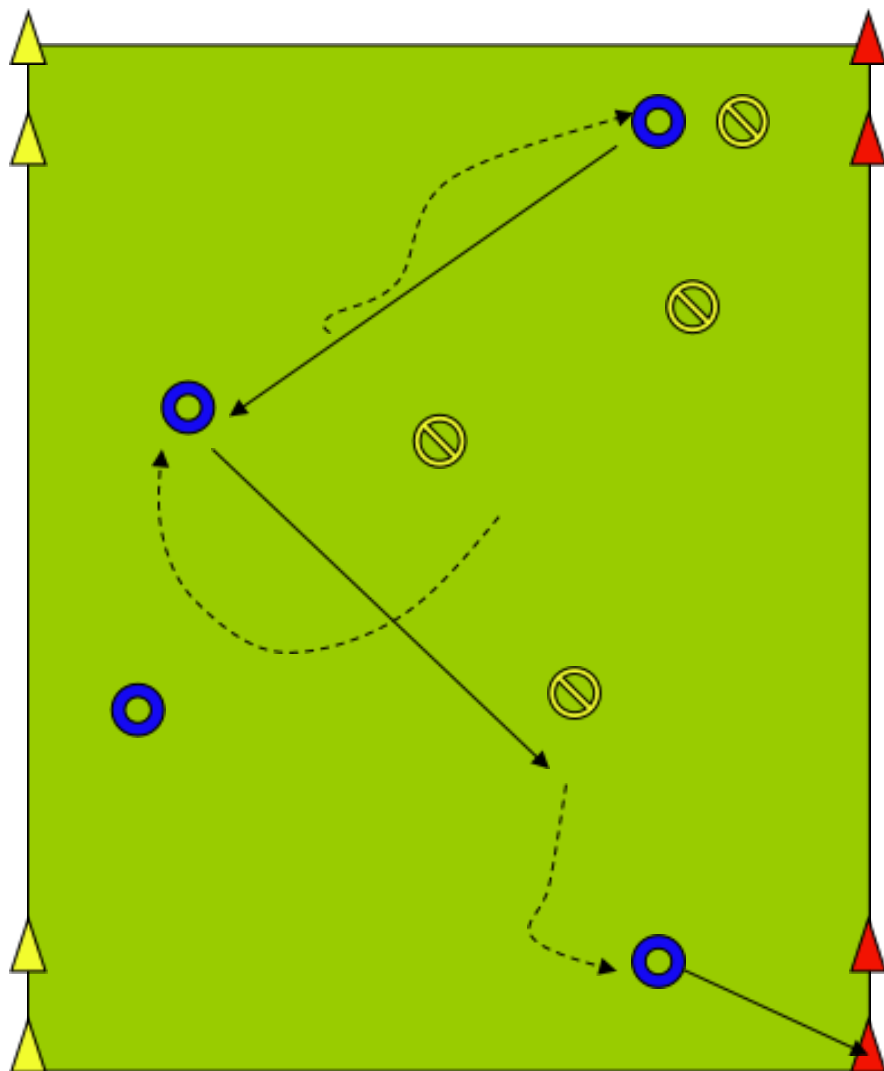
- 30m x 25m – As many as desired
- Both teams start on goal line. Yellows pass to blues who must then score by passing into either of the goals in the corners.
- If defenders steal ball they can score for double points.
- 3 attempts each then rotate blue team
- Extra points for 'nutmegs' / reward skill & creativity

Progressions:

- Dribble through goals to score.

Coaching Points:

- Work as a unit to create space and options. Suck teams over to one side of the pitch and play into the space behind. Can players beat a player in wide areas to score.



4 vs. 4

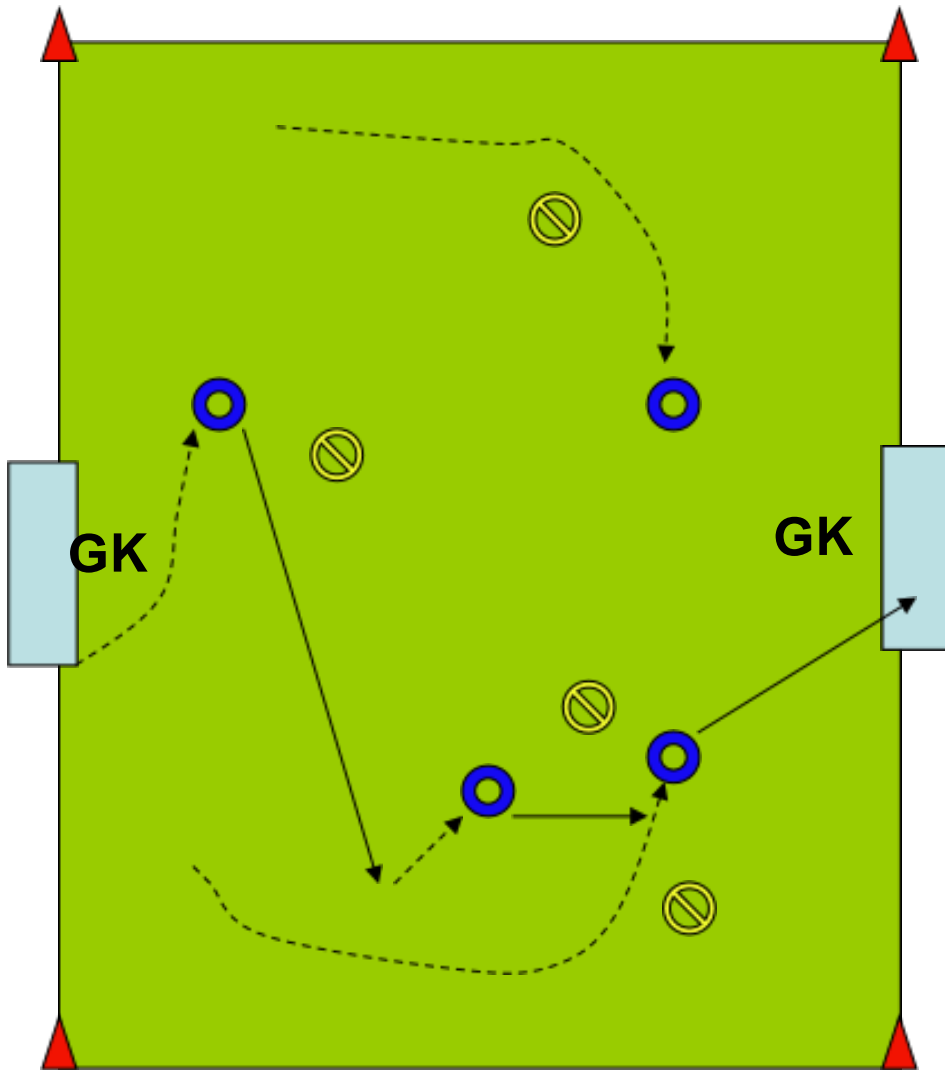


Goalkeeper Game:

- 35m x 25m – As many as desired
- Normal game play. To start the game both keepers have a ball in their hand. The coach will then call the colour of the team which is to start the match. The other keeper must quickly put their own ball in their net.
- Once a goal has been scored the keeper who concedes starts with a throw out.
- First to 5 goals wins – rotate teams. (max game time is 8 minutes)
- Extra points for skills/ tricks – reward creativity

Coaching Points:

- Movement off the ball to create space/ Try something new, be confident – make space for the shot then get your shots off quickly.
- Loads of goals....loads of **FUN!!**



4 vs. 4



4 Goal 'Crossroads' Game:

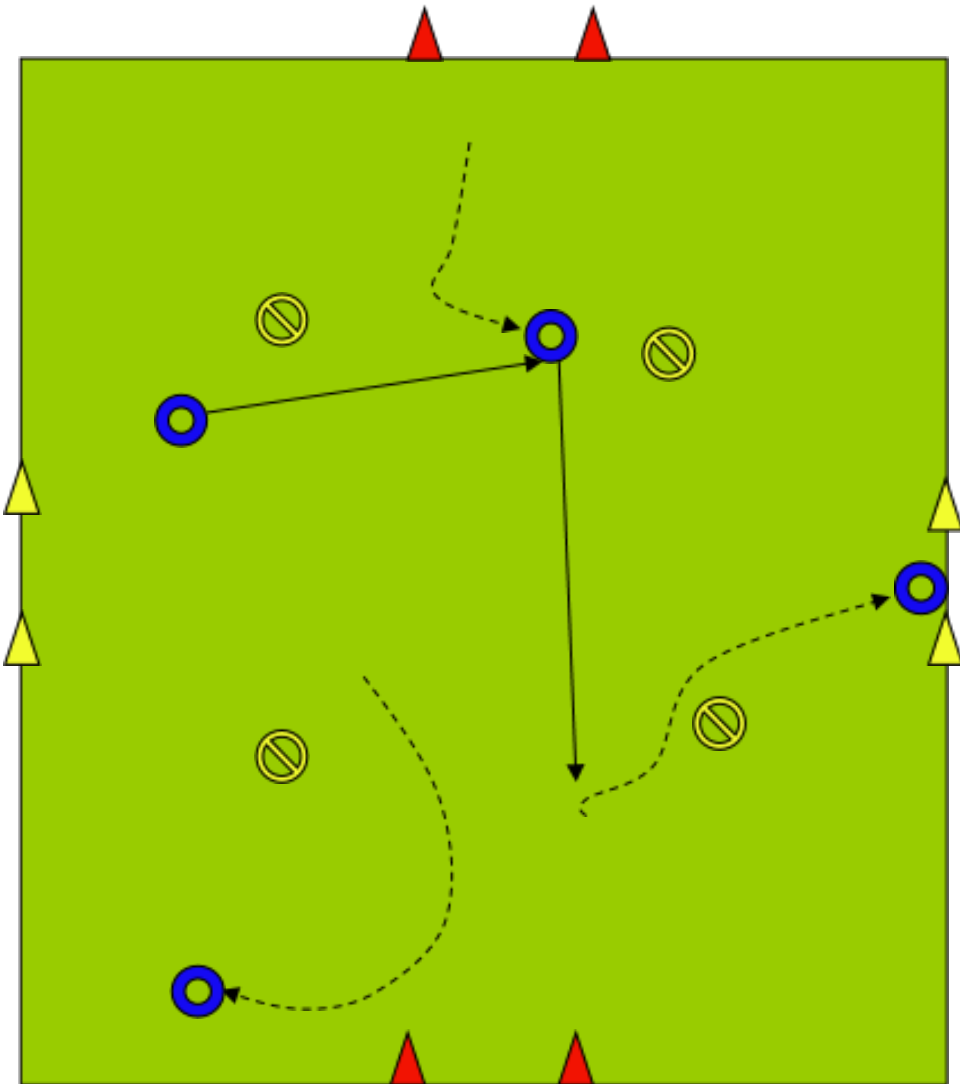
- 30m x 30m – vary goal size depending on learning outcome

Variation 1: (dribbling)

- Players are again encouraged to take players on with the emphasis on dribbling and tricks
- Players score by dribbling the ball between one of the goals
- If a goal has been scored, that team can now only score in one of the other three goals
- 1st team to 5 goals wins

Progressions:

- Once a team has scored in a goal they cannot score in that goal until all the goals have been scored in – when this is achieved that team wins
- One team plays across whilst the other plays up and down.



4 vs. 4



4 Goal 'Crossroads' Game:

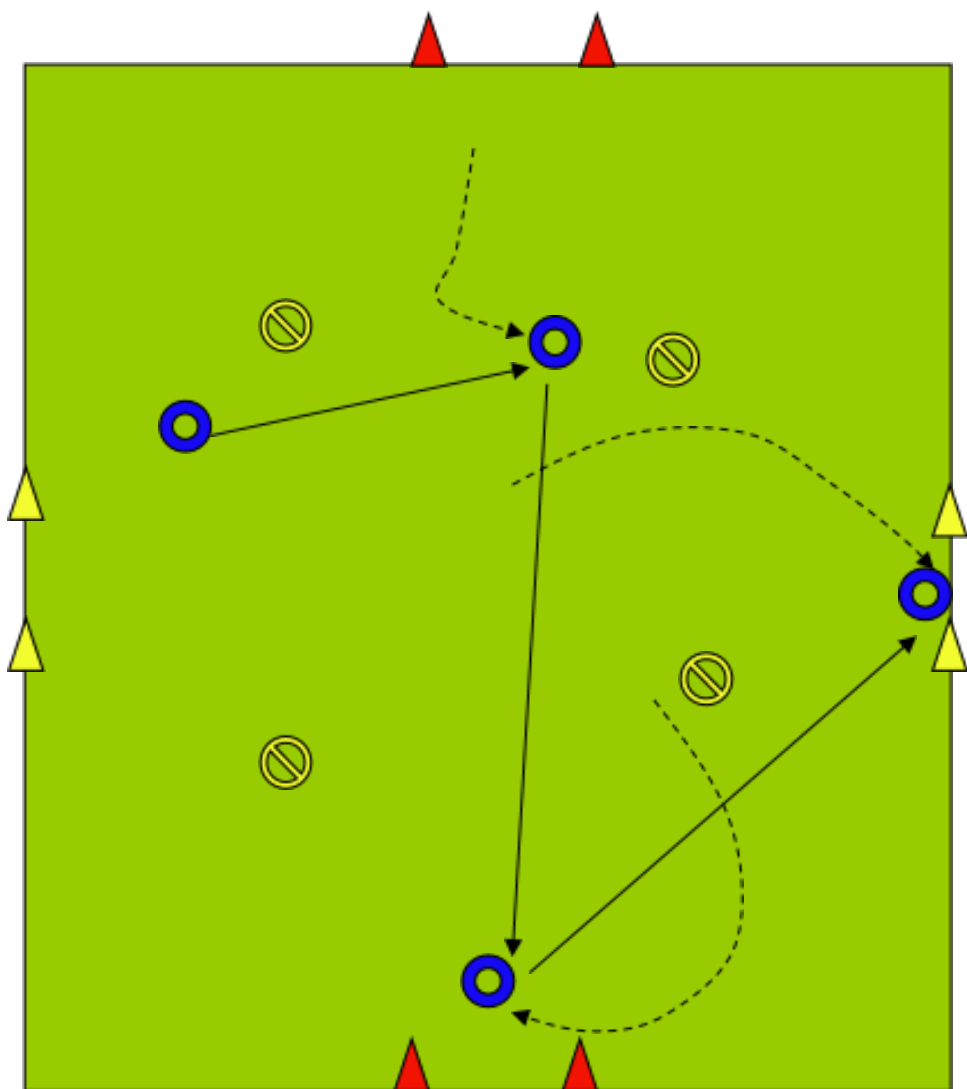
- 30m x 30m – vary goal size depending on learning outcome

Variation 2: (passing)

- Players are again encouraged to take players on 1v1 but the emphasis is now on passing and moving - '*playing* without the ball'
- Players score by passing the ball to a team mate between one of the goals
- If a goal has been scored, that team can now only score in one of the other three goals
- 1st team to 5 goals wins

Progressions:

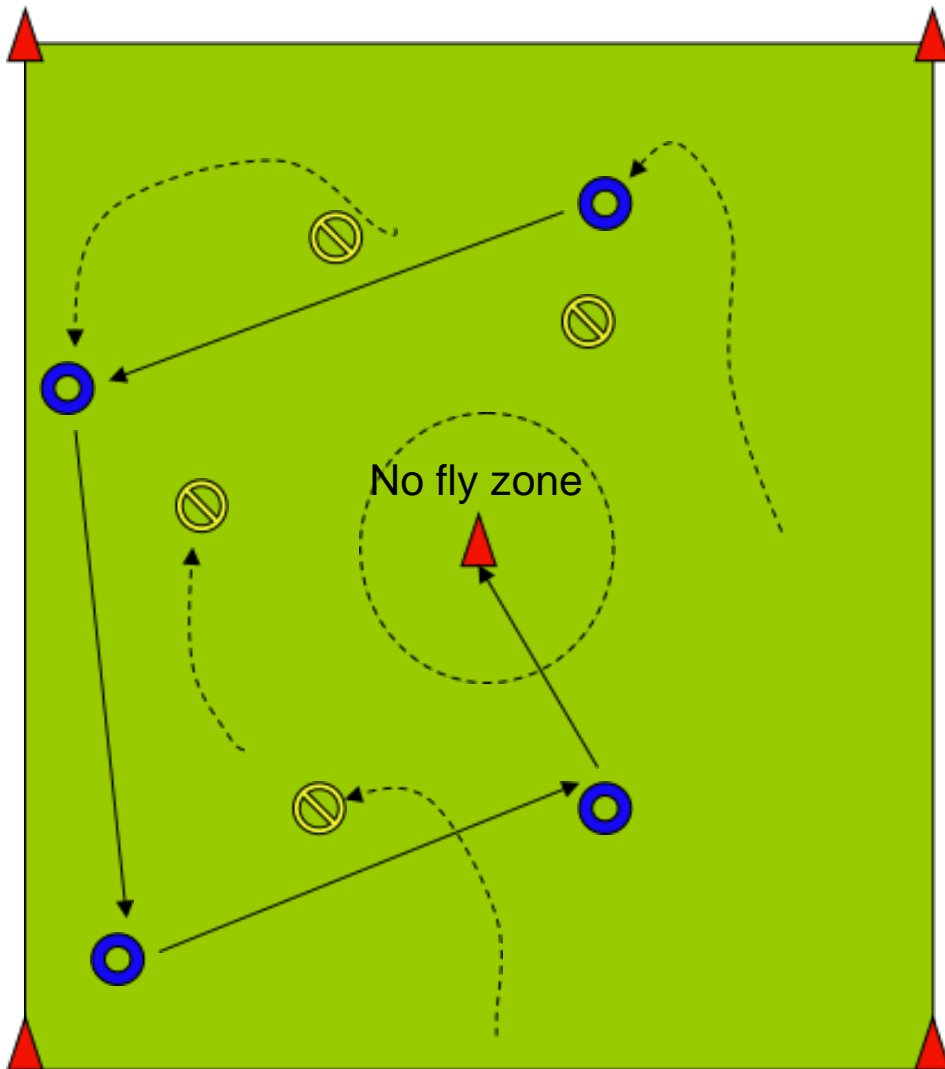
- If a team plays a 1 touch 1-2 they score a goal
- Once a team has scored in a goal they cannot score in that goal until all the goals have been scored in – when this is achieved that team wins



4 vs. 4



Cone Attack: (Accuracy & Sharp Passing)



- 30x 30m – with 3m circle (no fly zone)
Main area dependent on age of player
- No players are allowed into the 'no fly zone'
- Both teams have to keep possession and work the space in the area until they can create the space to take a shot at the cone
- Use tricks and skills to beat the player to create space for the shot
- Reward creativity with goals and bonuses

Progressions:

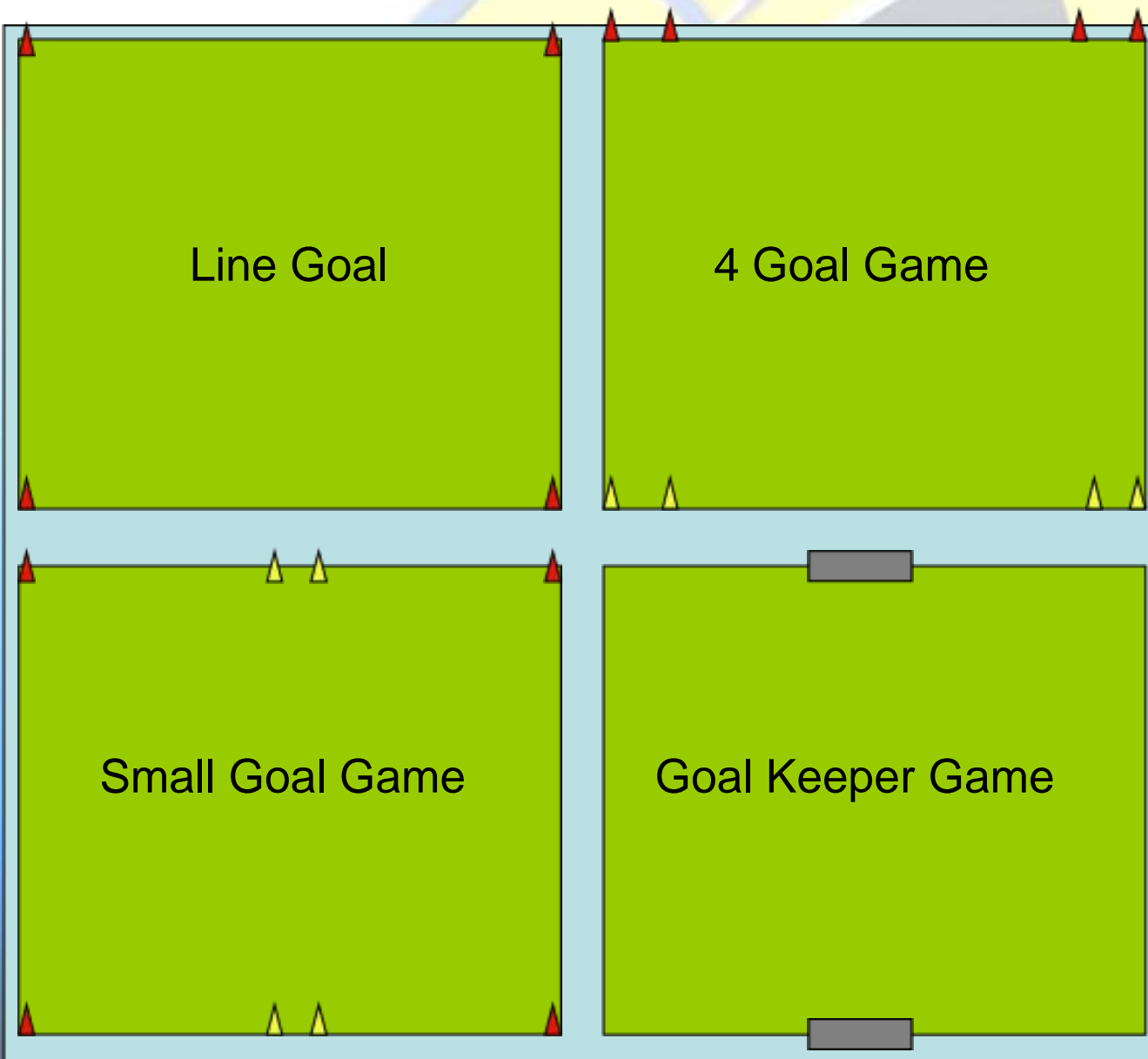
- 1 touch finish
- Time Limit – 1 minute to defend the cone
- 1 minute to score as many goals as possible

Sample Session 7 -11's

(2 Hours Approx.)

- Introduction (5 mins)
 - Explain Learning Outcomes
- Warm Up (15 mins)
- 1 vs. 1 (20 mins)
- 2 vs. 2 (20 mins)
- 3 vs.3/ 3 vs. 4 (20 mins)
- 4 vs. 4 Finishing Games (30 mins)
- Warm Down (5 mins)
- Debrief (5 mins)
 - Summation of session
 - Feedback
- **NB** – *Plenty of water breaks as this is highly intensive work.*
Hydration is key to the maintenance of optimal sporting performance.

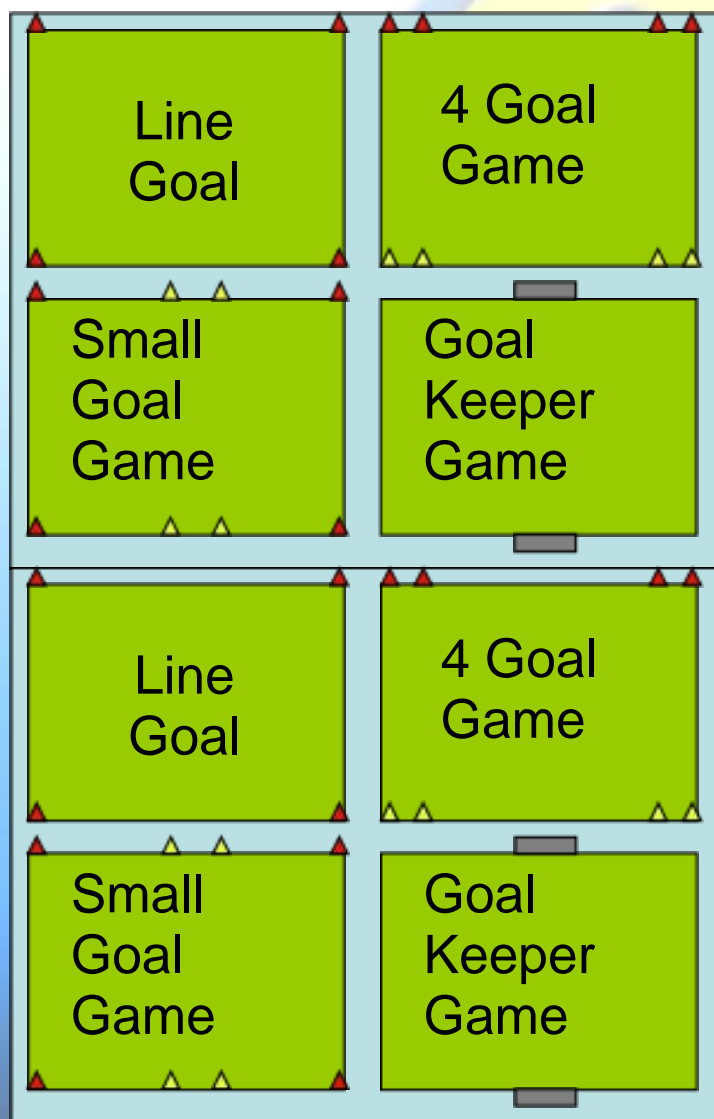
Academy 4 vs. 4 Layout



Academy (2 Age groups):

- Put age groups into teams of 4/ 3 to suit numbers.
- Play 8 minute games followed by 2 - 4 minute water break then rotate teams clockwise so that each team plays under different conditions.
- Can mix age groups or keep separate.
- 1 coach per game – Extra points for skills/ tricks - ***reward creativity.***

ADC 4 vs. 4 Pitch Layout



Advanced Development Centre 4 vs. 4:

- Combine 8's & 9's / 10's & 11's
- Play 8 minute games followed by 2 – 4 minute water breaks then rotate teams so that each team plays under different conditions.
- Add conditions to the games to suit learning outcomes, remember: ***Player Centred.***
- Can mix 8's with 9's and 10's with 11's
- 1 coach per game
- Extra points for tricks/ skills – ***Reward Creativity.***

Glossary of Terms

Creativity - The ability to think up and design new inventions, produce works of art, solve problems in new ways, or develop an idea based on an original, novel, or unconventional approach.

Dynamic - (**dī-nām'ik**): Of or relating to energy or to objects in motion. Marked by intensity and vigor; forceful. Of or relating to variation of intensity.

Ethos - (**ē'thōs'**): The disposition, character, or fundamental values peculiar to a specific person, people, culture, or movement:

Proprioception - (**prō'prē-ō-sěp'shən**): The unconscious perception of movement and spatial orientation arising from stimuli within the body itself.

Skill - (**skīl**): Proficiency, facility, or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training or experience. An art, trade, or technique, particularly one requiring use of the hands or body. A developed talent or ability.