Skill Acquisition Manual

A resource for youth coaches of players aged 9-12 years

FOOTBALL
FEDERATION
AUSTRALIA

FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA
TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT
JULY, 2018

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CONTENTS

4 **Foreword by Emma Highwood, Head of Community, Football Development & Women's Football**

5 **Preface by Eric Abrams, FFA National Technical Director**

6 **FFA's Vision and Philosophy**

7 **The Building Blocks**

8 **Skill Acquisition Phase (9-12 Years)**

10 **Playing Formats**

24 **Skill Acquisition Phase Coaching Guidelines**

34 **Principles of Play**

35 **Core Skills in Attack and Defence**

36 **Game-Intervention-Game (GIG) Methodology**

- 56 C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T
- 57 Constraints-based Coaching Model

58 **Term Planner**

62 **Example Sessions**

- 66 First Touch
- 72 Striking the ball
- 78 Running with the ball
- 84 1v1
- 90 Goalkeeping

96 **Bibliography**

FOREWORD

In 2015, Football Federation Australia launched the *Whole of Football Plan* (WOFP) with a set of ambitious, yet tangible goals that everyone in Australian Football could work towards over the next 20 years. In developing this plan, we held a firm conviction that Football's best years were ahead of us.

A first step was the design of FFA's 4 Year Strategy Plan (2016-2019) which is made up of four pillars with key targets:

1. Connect more fans with the Hyundai A-League and Westfield W-League

2. Improve the experience for all participants

3. Build generations of successful National Teams

4. Lead towards a unity of purpose

The FFA Skill Acquisition Manual: *A resource for youth coaches of players aged 9-12 years* has been developed to reflect our shared football vision by giving coaches a tool to help engage as many boys and girls as possible to have an enjoyable and memorable football experience. For some, it will form part of the journey to play in the Hyundai A-League or Westfield W-League and potentially one day represent the Caltex Socceroos or Westfield Matildas.

I'm delighted to formally publish this document and thank the entire FFA team and all State and Territory Member Federations for their input in its development. I look forward in witnessing the continual growth of the game and seeing all boys and girls developing a love for the game by having a truly enjoyable, positive and educational football experience.

Emma Highwood
FFA Head of Community, Football Development & Women's Football

PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that I present FFA's Skill Acquisition Manual: *A resource for youth coaches of players aged 9-12 years*. The Skill Acquisition Phase is the 'Golden Age of motor learning,' making it an important stage of technical development. This manual aims to provide youth coaches with the necessary tools to create developmentally appropriate practical sessions that are inclusive of all Australian girls and boys aged 9-12 years who have a passion and interest to play football.

During my time as National Technical Director, I have observed numerous Skill Acquisition practical sessions around the country and witnessed some quality coaching. However, it is evident that children in this development stage need to be exposed to more activities that closely resemble the demands of the real game. Creating FUN games in practical sessions will grow children's passion for football and keep them in our beautiful game for life. Exposing children to more games in practical sessions will also help 'develop thinking players' to make appropriate decisions for themselves in matches.

The Game-Intervention-Game (GIG) methodology presented in this manual taps into children's inherent desire to play more games. It encourages decision making and more game-specific ball contacts during practical sessions. The approach presented in this methodology provides opportunities for the coach to utilise both 'Game Sense' (implicit learning) and 'explicit' (teaching technique with supporting feedback) coaching methods to facilitate a FUN 'player-centred' approach to football development.

Youth coaches play an integral role in raising the overall standards of football in Australia, therefore developing a larger pool of potentially talented players to represent the Westfield Matildas and Caltex Socceroos. I am confident that Australian youth coaches will adopt this approach as we work together to contribute towards developing better football players for the future.

Eric Abrams
FFA National Technical Director

FFA'S VISION AND PHILOSOPHY

Football Federation Australia has articulated a National Playing Style Statement in the National Football Curriculum (NFC) which strongly considers and accommodates the Australian football context:

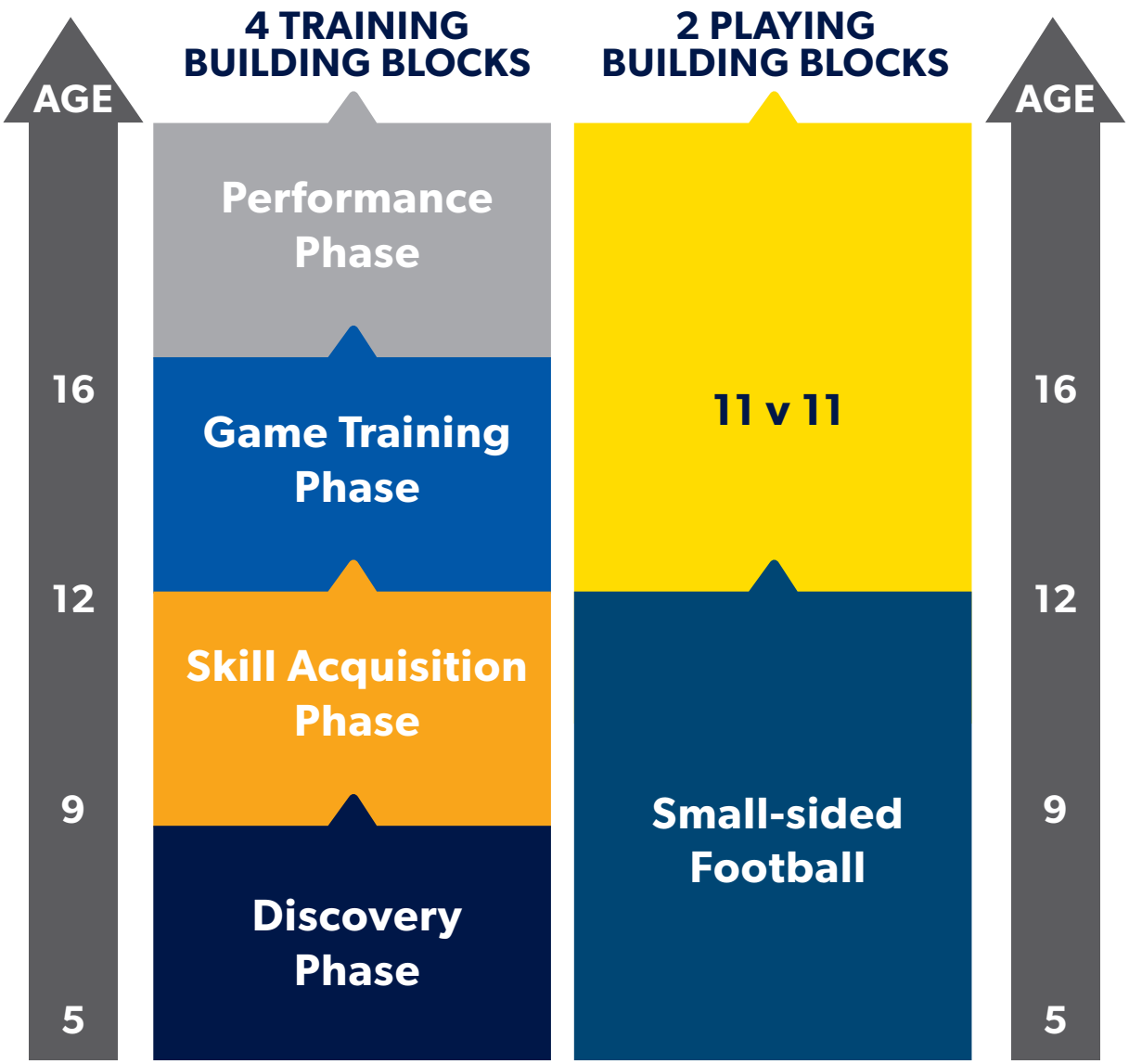
A proactive brand of football, based on effective possession with the cutting edge provided by creative individuals.

Defensively the key components are quick transition and intelligent collective pressing.

The Playing Style is underpinned by a strong 'team mentality', capitalising on Australia's traditional strengths.

This National Playing Style Statement provides a focus for all Australian football coaches in developing players and teams that are able to execute our brand of football. Having an overarching National Playing Style enables youth coaches to see the bigger picture and make positive contributions in nurturing youth players to develop the technical, tactical, mental and physical skill-sets required to become confident players in the future. This shared vision will also play an integral part in raising the overall standards of football and develop generations of quality footballers in our country.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS



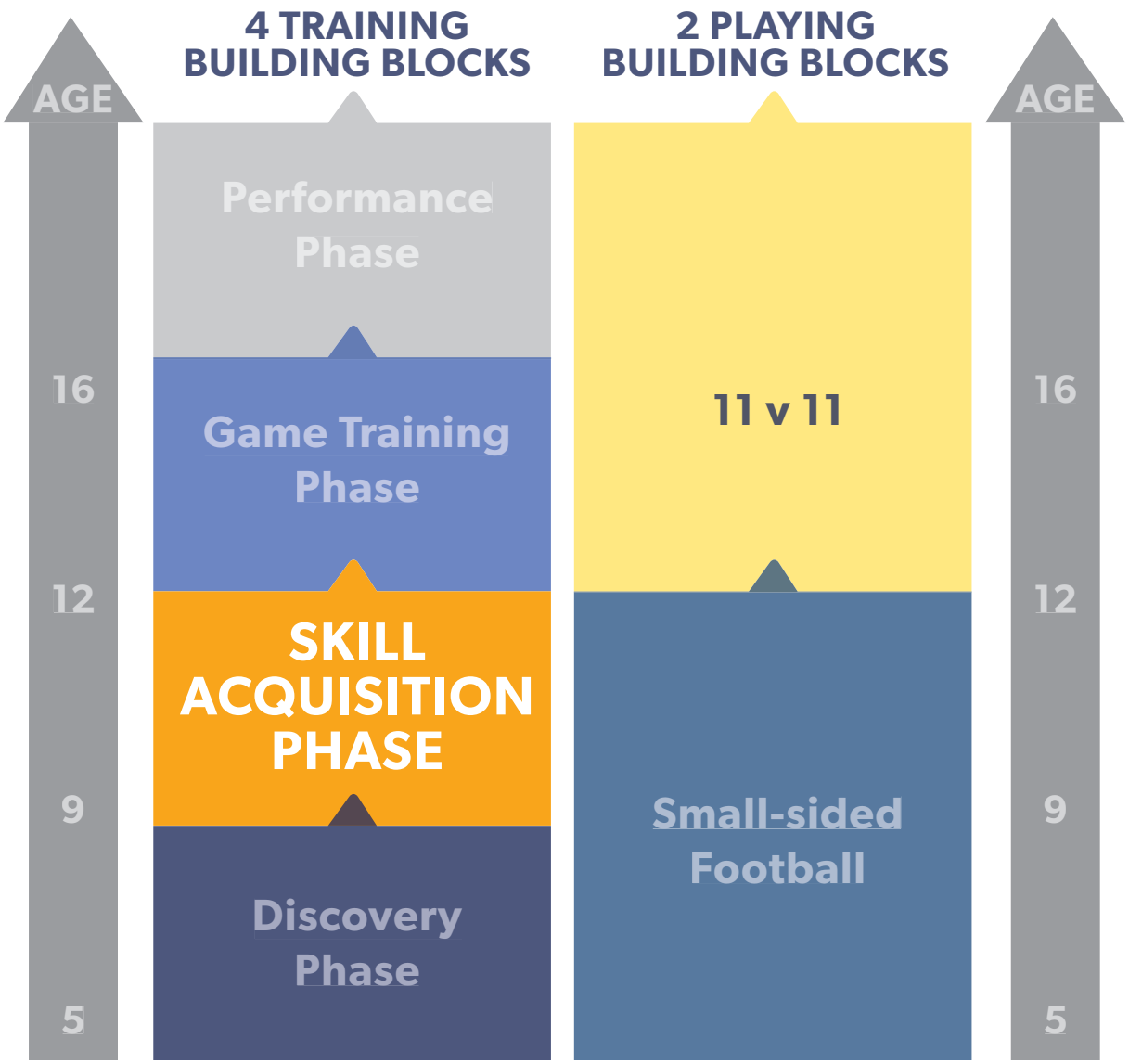
The FFA National Football Curriculum distinguishes 6 Building Blocks: 4 Training Building Blocks and 2 Playing Building Blocks.

For the purpose of this manual, we will only look at the Skill Acquisition Phase Training Building Block and the Small-sided Football Playing Building Blocks. The Game Training Phase and Discovery Phase Training Building Blocks are covered in greater detail in the National Football Curriculum together with the 11 v 11 Building Block.

The FFA Building Blocks Methodology is the framework that provides practical guidelines for coaches working at all levels of youth development in order to help them in answering questions such as:

- What are the mental and physical characteristics of players in the various development stages?
- What type of practices are best suited for specific age groups and why?
- How long should a session go for and how often should I train?
- How do I plan and design my sessions?
- What are points of interest when I coach my team during matches?

SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE (9-12 YEARS)



- In the Skill Acquisition Phase the coach must focus on providing a solid foundation of game-related technical skills
- If the player does not gain this **skill foundation** during this phase it will be very difficult to make it up later
- No amount of fitness or competitive spirit will ever compensate for deficiencies in **functional game skills**

SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE (9-12 YEARS)

Children this age are usually:

- **highly motivated** and **enthusiastic**
- **competitive**, like challenges and want to show they're the best
- **well balanced** and **coordinated**
- **adaptive to learning** motor skills
- **still self-centered**, they start to learn how to work together
- **sensitive to criticism and failure** (praise is important)
- physically and mentally ready for a more structured approach to training

As mentioned above, in the period before entering the growth spurt that goes hand in hand with puberty, children are well balanced and coordinated. This makes them very adaptive to developing motor skills (techniques) especially since this is one of the brain's key development periods. Some children, in particular girls, will be going through the growth spurt during this period so the coach must take this into consideration as they will be experiencing major physical and emotional changes during such time.

Motor development experts call this phase of 'turbo charged' technical development: the '**Golden Age of motor learning**'. In no other development phase in life will motor learning happen faster than here. As a logical consequence of the above, it makes sense that we optimise this period to lay a sustainable technical foundation to develop more confident and technically proficient players.

PLAYING FORMATS

PLAYING FORMATS

9-10 YEARS

7v7 Playing Format: Attacking/Ball Possession (BP)

Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

7v7 Playing Format: Defending/Ball Possession Opponent (BPO)

Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

PLAYING FORMATS

9-10 YEARS

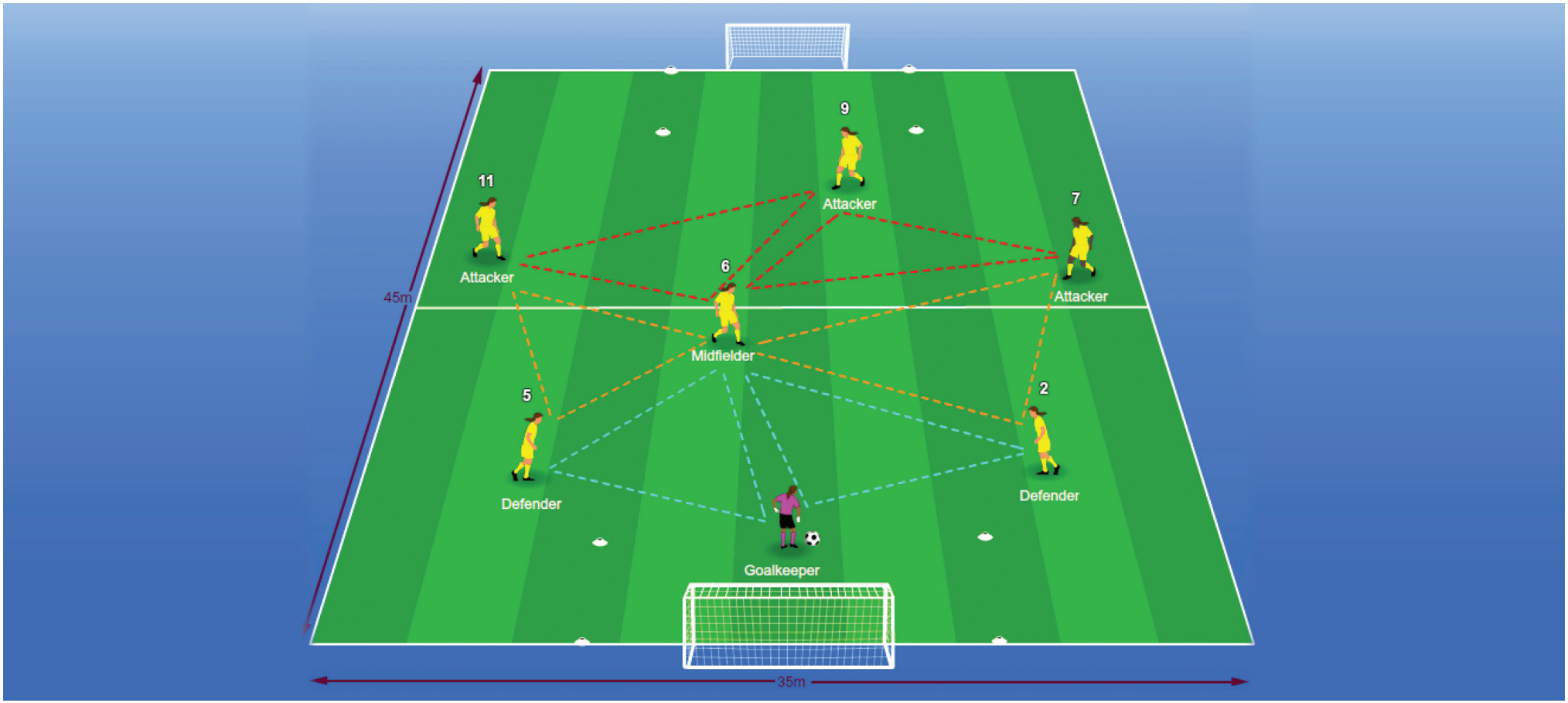
7V7 PLAYING FORMAT

- Recommended field size: 45 metres x 35 metres
- Recommended goal size: 3 metres wide x 2 metres high
- Recommended penalty box size: 5 metres deep x 12 metres wide
- Recommended playing shape: 1-2-1-3 in attacking (BP)
- Goalkeeper (1), Fullbacks (2, 5), Holding Midfielder (6), Central Striker (9) and Wingers (7, 11)
- Playing this shape encourages goalkeepers to play off their line and connect with the full backs and midfielder
- Shape is dynamic in attacking (BP) and defending (BPO), not static

PLAYING FORMATS

9-10 YEARS

7v7 Passing Triangles



Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

PLAYING FORMATS

9-10 YEARS

WHY PLAY 7V7?

- Provides individual players with more ball contacts in each match by dribbling, running with the ball, short/medium passing and striking the ball
- Opportunities to engage in 1v1 duels across the field of play
- More ball contacts also mean more moments and opportunities for decision making
- The focus is more on football skills rather than on physical qualities
- Recommended playing shape: 1-2-1-3
- This represents all lines of the 11 v 11 game
- Goalkeeper (1), Fullbacks (2, 5), Holding Midfielder (6), Central Striker (9) and Wingers (7, 11)
- Playing in this shape instead of 1-3-3: Goalkeepers are encouraged to stay engaged with defenders and the midfield player provides connection between the lines
- There is width and depth across the playing area in attack
- It encourages playing diagonal passes through better angles of support
- It offers spaces to penetrate with and without the ball
- When creating chances, there are numerous players in the scoring zone
- The shape is dynamic in attacking (BP) and defending (BPO), not static

PLAYING FORMATS

11-12 YEARS

9v9 Playing Format: Attacking/Ball Possession (BP)

Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

9v9 Playing Format: Defending/Ball Possession Opponent (BPO)

Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

PLAYING FORMATS

11-12 YEARS

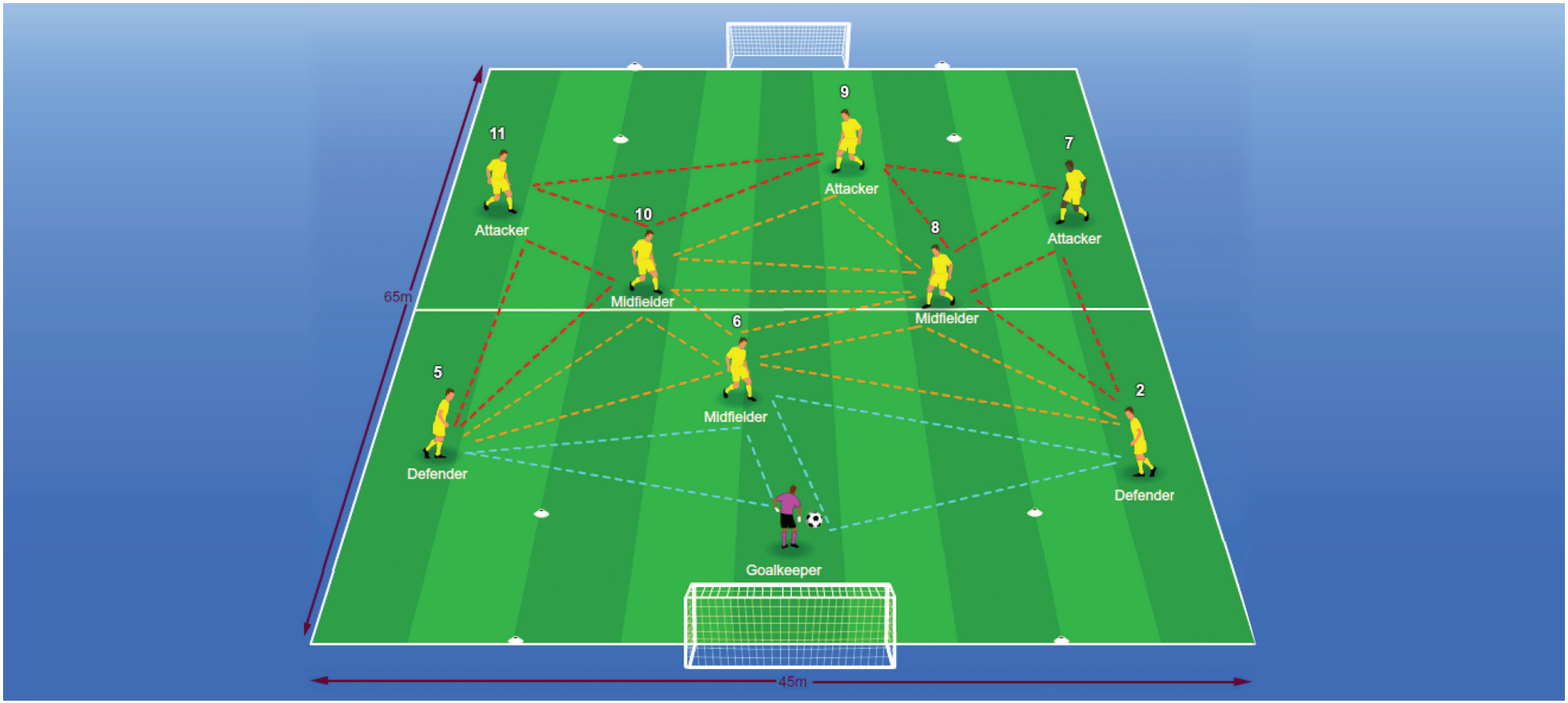
9V9 PLAYING FORMAT

- Recommended field size: 65 metres x 45 metres
- Recommended penalty box size: 10 metres deep x 20 metres wide
- Recommended goal size: 5 metres wide x 2 metres high
- Recommended playing shape: 1-2-3-3
- Goalkeeper (1), Fullbacks (2, 5), Holding Midfielder (6), Attacking Midfielders (8, 10), Central Striker (9) and Wingers (7, 11)
- Playing in this shape instead of 1-3-2-3: Goalkeepers are encouraged to play off their line and connect with the defenders (2, 5) and holding midfielder (6). Having two attacking midfielders (8, 10) with a supporting holding midfielder (6) enables more players to be engaged in creating goal scoring opportunities in attack
- Shape is dynamic in attacking (BP) and defending (BPO), not static

PLAYING FORMATS

11-12 YEARS

9v9 Passing Triangles



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PLAYING FORMATS

11-12 YEARS

WHY PLAY 9V9?

- Provides individual players more ball contacts in each match by dribbling, running with the ball, short/medium passing and striking the ball
- Opportunities to engage in 1v1 duels across the field of play
- The focus is more on football skills rather than on physical qualities
- There is width and depth across the playing area in attack
- There are many short and medium passing triangles across the entire field which encourages combination play
- It encourages playing diagonal and vertical passes through better angles of support
- It offers spaces to penetrate with and without the ball
- Numerous players inside the 'scoring zone' to convert goal scoring chances
- More opportunities to score goals using this playing format
- The shape is dynamic in attacking (BP) and defending (BPO), not static
- Helps players understand the 'principles of play' in attack and defence

PLAYING FORMATS

13 YEARS AND BEYOND

Why play 1-4-3-3 shape in the 11v11 format?

Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

PLAYING FORMATS

13 YEARS AND BEYOND

WHY PLAY 1-4-3-3 SHAPE IN THE 11V11 FORMAT?

- To develop seven (7) player profiles: Goalkeeper (1), Full Back (2, 5), Centre Back (3, 4), Holding Midfield (6), Attacking Midfield (8, 10), Central Striker (9), Winger (7, 11)
- Assists in developing in each line at least two different player profiles
- Equal distribution from the players according to the field size so efforts by players are equally distributed
- Encourages players to penetrate in all areas of the pitch
- Improves game intelligence and decision-making skills
- Offers opportunities to take initiative
- Provides opportunities to develop individual responsibilities
- Fosters team play – collective responsibility in attack and in defence
- Encourages communication and concentration
- Improves individual technical skills and team tactical skills
- Easily adaptable towards opponent
- Shape provides 24 triangles - encouraging players to play diagonal and vertical passes through better angles of support

PLAYING FORMATS

13 YEARS AND BEYOND

How does 1-4-3-3 shape relate to 9v9 and 7v7 playing formats?

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PLAYING FORMATS

13 YEARS AND BEYOND

HOW DO 7V7 AND 9V9 PLAYING FORMATS RELATE TO THE 1-4-3-3 SHAPE IN 11V11?

- The 1-4-3-3 formation is made up of three lines with a balanced spread of players over the pitch ('triangles' of players) which creates good conditions for: effective positioning play, playing out, combination football, creative and varied attacking play using the width of the field, and immediate pressure after losing possession

- The 1-4-3-3 formation reflects Australia's preference for a proactive, possession based brand of football and an aggressive high press to win the ball back as quickly as possible

- The 1-4-3-3 shape is made up of small, medium and large 'triangles' all over the pitch

- The 7v7 and 9v9 playing formats naturally lead up to the 1-4-3-3 formation in a logical and methodical manner

- 9-12 year olds do not have the capacity to play matches designed for adults, due to their physical development

- Adjusting the field size, equipment and playing numbers replicates the passing 'triangles' of the 11v11 playing format, taking into consideration the physical and emotional capabilities of young players

- The 7v7 and 9v9 playing formats provides players aged 9-12 the platform to play the 1-4-3-3 formation with confidence in their next stage of player development

SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE COACHING GUIDELINES

Trads

THINGS TO ENCOURAGE AS A COACH

Players

- Making decisions for themselves
- Experience by 'doing'
- Learning by making mistakes (trial and error)

Coaches

- Provide challenging experiences
- Be patient and positive
- Support your players and give them confidence
- Utilise coaching/learning opportunities
- Observe and evaluate player progress

Relate to your players

- Come down to players' eye level
- Use child friendly language
- Take a genuine interest in each child

KPI #1 FOR A COACH

"Inspire them to play independently of you!"

THINGS TO AVOID AS A COACH

Training

- Training young players as adults
- Not encouraging players to make decisions for themselves
- Continually criticising less talented players
- Criticising players for poor execution of skills
- Taking too long to provide instructions

Matches

- Winning at all costs mentality
- Not giving young players equal playing time
- Not exposing players to different positions
- Barking instructions from the sidelines
- Not encouraging players to make decisions for themselves
- Continually criticising less talented players
- Substituting a player just after he/she has made a mistake

"Tell me and I will forget

Show me and I may remember

Let me do and I will learn"

SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE COACHING GUIDELINES

FUN

- Games with goals on each end
- Points scoring system
- Individual functional skill training
- Playing games
- Different formats of tournaments

NOT FUN

- Activities without the ball
- Long detailed instructions
- Games without shooting at goal
- Games without direction
- Running training

SKILL ACQUISITION PHASE COACHING GUIDELINES

FUN

- Scoring goals
- Providing assists
- Preventing goals
- Playing well as a team and winning
- Positive team culture and spirit

NOT FUN

- Poor team culture and spirit
- Negative comments from parents
- Negative comments from coaches
- Criticising an individual player in a team
- Ball possession without an end product
- Games with exaggerated numerical majority

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PLAYING FOOTBALL = FUN!!

COACHING TIPS

Make the practical sessions attractive, inspiring and challenging for your players:

- Use real GOALS - Goal of football: end product is to score GOALS (and prevent goals)
- Always try to find a good balance between challenge and security. Ensure that you set challenges to your players that are achievable with effort!

MOTIVATION

- Scoring goals
- Providing assists
- Scoring as a team
- Stopping opposition from scoring

PLAY MORE GAMES = FUN!!

	NOVICE COACHES	DEVELOPING COACHES	EXPERIENCED COACHES
Overall Objective	• **Organise your players to 'play more games'** • **Seek assistance from a mentor coach**	• **Organise your players to 'play more games' with a focus on attacking or defending in each session** • **Seek assistance from mentor**	• **Organise your players to 'play more games' with an enhanced focus on attacking or defending in each session** • **Support less experienced coaches**
FUNctional Activity	• Copy a FUNctional Activity example from the manual to suit your playing group	• Modify a FUNctional Activity example from the manual to suit your playing group	• Create a FUNctional Activity from your experience to suit your playing group
Game (Recognition)	• Copy a Game from the manual to include all players	• Modify a Game from the manual to suit your group	• Create a Game from your experience to suit your group
Mini-Games (Application)	• Copy a Mini-Game from the manual to include all players • Praise and encourage effort	• Modify a Mini-Game from the manual to suit your group • Provide basic feedback	• Create Mini-Games from your experience to suit your group • Provide short, quality feedback

PLAY MORE GAMES = FUN!!

	NOVICE COACHES	DEVELOPING COACHES	EXPERIENCED COACHES
Overall Objective	• **Organise your players to 'play more games'** • **Seek assistance from a mentor coach**	• **Organise your players to 'play more games' with a focus on attacking or defending in each session** • **Seek assistance from mentor**	• **Organise your players to 'play more games' with an enhanced focus on attacking or defending in each session** • **Support less experienced coaches**
Free Game (Evaluation)	• Copy a Free Game from the manual to include all players • Praise and encourage effort	• Modify a Free Game from the manual to suit your group • Observe progress of players	• Create Free Game from your experience to suit players • Measure progress of players
Home-skill	• Set an 'individual' challenge for each player, such as, aim to reach three more juggles	• Set an 'individual' challenge for each player and monitor their progress pre-training	• Create a 'home-skill' program to master the core skills
Intervention (Skill breakdown)	• Not Applicable	• Recommended	• Break down core skills in attack and defence

PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

Youth coaches need to have a basic understanding of the **principles of play** in **attacking** and **defending**. It is encouraged that practical sessions in the Skill Acquisition Phase are designed to introduce these principles to players aged 9-12 years. Children aged 5-9 years operating in the *Discovery Phase* are exposed to practical sessions that develop 'ball feeling' through FUN activities, with a focus on developing the core skills of the game when they have the ball. As children enter the Skill Acquisition Phase, they need to be able to understand the two constants of football: **score goals** and **protect the goal**. Introducing the **attacking** and **defending** principles of play in the *Skill Acquisition Phase* will help players develop a good understanding of what they are trying to achieve as a team and as individuals. Moreover, it will ensure that youth coaches do not neglect the defending side of our game.

ATTACK	DEFENCE
When your team has the ball and is trying to score goals	**When the opponents have the ball and you are protecting your goal**
Penetration (including Improvisation): Get the ball into a scoring position by either passing, running with the ball or dribbling	**Delay:** Reduce time and space for opponent to move ball towards your goal often by pressing the ball carrier
Support (Depth): Create passing opportunities (behind the ball) *when* the player in possession of the ball cannot pass or run forwards	**Cover (Depth):** Provide close support behind the first defender and be able to cut out forward passes to players in advanced positions
Mobility: Be able to change the point of attack to another part of the field when forward progress is not possible or desirable	**Balance:** Retaining team shape and being able to defend against changes in the point of attack
Width: Players spread out to create passing opportunities to other players on the field and create spaces between defenders	**Concentration:** Keeping close together or staying compact to intercept forward passes and be able to help each other quickly

Adapted from Worthington (1974) & Pill (2015)

CORE SKILLS IN ATTACK AND DEFENCE

	ATTACK	DEFENCE
First Touch	• Controlling the ball with all allowed body parts, including: feet, thigh, chest and head	• Closest defender applies immediate pressure on ball carrier • Challenge when a heavy touch is taken
Striking the ball	Includes all forms of striking the ball, such as: • Short, medium and long-range passing • Shooting • Crossing • Heading • Throw-ins In addition, goalkeeper (GK) actions, such as: • Throwing - short, medium and long range • Distribution from hands - volley/side volley	Includes player actions, such as: • Delaying • Interception • Tackling • Blocking shots In addition, goalkeeper (GK) actions, such as: • Starting position in relation to the ball • Dealing with through balls • Diving and parrying
Running with the ball	• Travelling at speed into space • Dribbling in tight areas	• Slow down the actions of the attacker • Apply pressure on player running with the ball (frontal, backwards or sideways)
1v1	• All moves, feints and accelerations to get past and away from an opponent	• Apply immediate pressure on ball carrier • Win the 1v1 duel and retain possession

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

mitre

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

- Based on tapping into children's natural desire to play more **games**
- Reflects **'Whole-Part-Whole'** model of 'Game Sense' approach to coaching
- Provides opportunities to combine **explicit** (step by step teaching) instruction with **implicit** (game sense) learning
- Encourages **greater decision making** and more **game-specific ball contacts** during practical sessions
- Develops **'thinking players'**
- Closely resembles the **demands of the real game**

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

FUNctional Activity

(Linked to Core Skill)

5-10 Mins

Skill Acquisition Player Program

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

The FUNctional Activity

- **FUN activity** with lots of **football specific movements** in the first 5-10 minutes of the practical session
- **All players are involved,** with the focus on **developing fundamental movement actions at high speed**
- Tailor activity to allow all players to **experience high success rates**
- Aims to **wire the brain** to perform core skills at high speed and sets the scene for the remainder of the session
- **Develops movement patterns** of children to become confident movers in daily life
- FUNctional Activities may include: games, circuits or juggling tasks that are FUN and linked to the core skill

Some FUNctional Activity examples to consider are found on pages 66, 72, 78 and 84

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Game:
Recognition Phase

10 Mins

Skill Acquisition Player Program

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

The Recognition Game

- First phase of this 'Whole-Part-Whole' model
- A game complying with the rules of the real game and **free of any specific conditions** for the first five minutes to encourage players to showcase freedom of expression
- May include overloads to one team to help bring about certain actions, focusing on a specific core skill
- Should have two goals and goalkeepers protecting each goal to **reflect the real game**
- After the first five minutes, the coach can introduce a **scoring system** as an **incentive** to encourage certain actions
- The **incentive** is used to bring about desired actions but does not restrict them from freedom of expression. For example, three points can be awarded if the player scores after beating an opponent in a 1v1 duel; this encourages players to engage in more 1v1 duels but still allows them to make decisions appropriate to the situation for themselves as a goal scored in any other way is still worth one point

Some Recognition Game examples to consider are found on pages 67, 73, 79 and 85

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Skill Acquisition Player Program

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Mini-Games (Application Phase)

- Sub-phases of football; such as: 1v1s, 2v1s and 2v2s, making up the second phase of this 'Whole-Part-Whole' model
- Should ideally be organised between 2-4 players to **maximise practice attempts** in game realistic situations
- These games require a **scoring objective** for **all** players, including goalkeepers
- Should be designed to encourage players to **repeatedly practise a focused core skill** in the simplest tactical situation
- Focused on either 'Attacking' (1st session) or 'Defending' (2nd session) to introduce children aged 9-12 years to the principles of play in attack and defence at a young age
- Should include some Key Coaching Questions to develop 'thinking players' and Key Coaching Words as reminders

Some Mini-Games examples to consider are found on pages 70, 76, 82 and 88

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Intervention:
Skill Breakdown

Coaching input (optional)

10 Mins

Skill Acquisition Player Program

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Intervention (Skill Breakdown)

- Opportunities exist to breakdown core skills between games to **develop** or **refine technical competence**
- **Demonstrations** by the coach or model player are encouraged to support learning functional technical skills
- Core skills should be broken down in practice activities that **closely resemble the conditions of the real game**
- A set of **Key Coaching Questions** should be developed to stimulate thinking, instead of telling players the answers
- Key Coaching Questions may be created to breakdown skills during pre-action, action and post-action movements
- Support players by creating a set of child-friendly **Key Coaching Words** to remind them of certain actions
- Focus on either Attacking (BP) or Defending (BPO) principles in each session supported by Key Coaching Questions and Key Coaching Words to reflect this

Some Attacking Intervention examples to consider are found on pages 68, 74, 80 and 86
Some Defending Intervention examples to consider are found on pages 69, 75, 81 and 87

SKILL BREAKDOWN - EXPLICIT COACHING

I DO:	**The coach or model player demonstrates each step**
WE DO:	**The coach and players work through the steps together**
YOU DO:	**Players practice their new skills independently**

Adapted from John Fleming's Explicit Instruction (2015)

SKILL BREAKDOWN - EXPLICIT COACHING

- A suggested process in **coaching technique** in the 'Intervention' (skill breakdown) is the 'I Do-We Do-You Do' explicit instruction model
- Initially, the coach introduces the skill to his/her players and its relevance to the game of football
- The **I Do** phase involves the coach explaining to the players what they need to know and showing them how to do the things that they need to be able to do by using a demonstration, either by the coach or a model player
- The **We Do** is the second phase of this model. It involves doing tasks together. By working together, the coach can help players use the steps they need to follow to complete desired actions, such as, dribbling to beat an opponent
- The **You Do** phase of this model involves players practising what has already been shown by themselves. The coach monitors progress and provides feedback using a combination of **Key Coaching Questions** to stimulate thinking and **Key Coaching Words** as reminders of desired actions

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Free Game: Evaluation Phase

15-20 Mins

Skill Acquisition Player Program

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Evaluation (Free) Game

- Final phase of this 'Whole-Part-Whole' model
- A game complying with the rules of the real game and **free of any specific conditions** or incentives to measure rate of learning and understanding
- Option to return to the original 'recognition game' or design another game free of any restrictions or incentives
- Should have two goals and goalkeepers protecting each goal to **reflect the real game**
- Coach is advised to **'coach on the run'** by praising and encouraging desired actions without stopping the game
- If an obvious issue is recognised, the coach is advised to speak to the players individually without interrupting the flow of the game or use **Key Coaching Words** to remind players of desired actions that were covered in the session
- All re-starts should reflect the real game, such as, goal-kicks, throw-ins, corners, free-kicks and centre kick-offs

Some Evaluation (Free) Game examples to consider are found on pages 71, 77, 83 and 89

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Home-skill

Skill Acquisition Player Program

GAME-INTERVENTION-GAME (GIG) METHODOLOGY

Home-skill

- The coach is encouraged to provide players with a **'challenge'** to practise at home, for example, perform three more juggles than a player's personal best; these challenges need to be tailored to each player's needs and abilities
- Contributes towards accumulating **hours of deliberate practise** to help develop 'technical expertise'
- An **on-line portal** may be created to provide players a set of home-skill activities to practise at home, such as, videos of professionals or competent young players effectively executing the specific skills in a match
- Provide simple instructions (step by step) and **Key Coaching Words** to help players perform the activities
- Measure progress prior to the start of a training session, for example, all players need to juggle the ball to show their progress to the coach. Alternatively, activities can be embedded into FUNctional Activity to monitor progress
- Provide encouragement to players to practise technical skills at home

GIG METHODOLOGY

IMPLICIT LEARNING

Game Sense

EXPLICIT COACHING

Step by step teaching

GIG METHODOLOGY RATIONALE

- Football Federation Australia (FFA), together with key football stakeholders, has identified a coaching model of preference to develop the technical, tactical, mental and physical skill-sets required of young players
- Some experienced coaches in Australia claim that children need to be playing in more **games** to help them develop skills and decision making under pressure, whereas other experienced coaches claim that skills need to be taught explicitly using a step by step process to develop the tools to execute them in a game
- At FFA, we acknowledge that both approaches have merit in developing youth players and that the Australian coaching stakeholders' perspective should be considered in developing a methodology that fits our unique context
- Most coaches agree that children aged 9-12 years need to be exposed to playing in more games in the **'golden age of motor learning'** to develop perception, decision making and execution in game realistic situations
- Therefore, at FFA, we want to synergise both coaching models and seek a collaborative coaching alternative that will be well received by both coaches and players in developing generations of better football players for the future
- The **GIG Methodology** will provide opportunities for coaches to utilise both Game Sense (implicit learning) and 'explicit coaching' (teaching technique with supporting feedback) practices to develop players' game intelligence and technical skills under game realistic pressure with the support and guidance of the coach
- This methodology offers an **alternative model** to coach players aged 9-12 years and will be linked to FFA Coach Education

C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T.

C	**COACHING STYLE:** Provide feedback in the drink break or change of activities without interrupting the game. Use player role models.
H	**HOW YOU SCORE/WIN:** Increase opportunities to score and provide an incentive for both attackers and defenders to increase competitiveness.
A	**AREA:** Increase or decrease the game challenges by changing the size/shape of the playing area.
N	**NUMBERS:** Use different team numbers to help achieve your session objective, such as, overload the advantage to one team.
G	**GAME RULES:** Change the rules slightly, for example, scoring after executing a cross from wide areas will be worth 3 goals.
E	**EQUIPMENT:** Vary the equipment, for example, bigger goals, smaller goals or more goals.
I	**INCLUSION:** Engage players in modifying the practices; provide opportunities for all players to experience FUN and success.
T	**TIME:** Reduce or extend the time to perform actions, for example, get a shot at goal within 10 seconds.

Adapted from: FFA Skill Training Certificate Presenters Manual, p. 10

CONSTRAINTS-BASED COACHING MODEL

Experienced coaches may opt to combine a variety of methods from the 'constraints-based coaching model' that was introduced at the 2017 FFA State Coaching Conferences to help further develop their players in the Skill Acquisition Phase. They may choose to: combine methods within an activity; apply them to specific players in the activity to individualise their development; or, change methods within an activity as players learn and develop.

The three 'constraints-based coaching model' methods are briefly discussed below:

RESTRICT

- Traditional approach aimed at bringing about desired actions by restricting certain behaviours, for example, 2 touches only
- Effective way to ensure lots of repetition of a core skill in focus
- May result in only one type of response and not always the correct response for the situation
- This method can reduce realism and may be better utilised in later stages of player development, such as, Game Training and Performance Phases

RELATE

- At the other end of spectrum, the game is completely free (no restrictions) but we set challenges for the players which are related to the core skill and main moment in focus. In this manual, we commonly refer to this as a 'Free Game,' which takes place at the beginning and completion of the 'Whole-Part-Whole' model
- The coach plants a seed about the desired outcome without making it mandatory or restricting their 'freedom of expression'
- Ideally supported by effective questioning to develop thinking players
- May produce less repetition of the desired core skill in focus
- Provides the greatest realism related to the match, retaining the FUN emotions of playing football in its most natural form for players in this age group

REWARD

- The outcome/behaviours are not mandatory but players gain a reward when they use them appropriately – normally in the form of goals/points. In the methodology section of this manual, we commonly refer this to a 'scoring system,' which acts as an 'incentive' to encourage certain actions
- May result in less repetition of the core skill compared to 'restrict' but allows for more match realism, player-decision making and freedom of expression
- This acts as a middle ground between Restrict and Relate, whilst maintaining the FUN emotions of playing football in its most natural form

Adapted from Elite Soccer, 2015

TERM PLANNER

Skill Acquisition Phase Planning and Considerations

- The Skill Acquisition Phase 'Term Planner' reflects the regular Australian school term academic calendar
- At this age, boys and girls have an inherent desire to play FUN games
- The FFA Skill Acquisition GIG Methodology provides opportunities for children to play FUN games during practical sessions
- In every SAP session, the focus is on one of the four core skills and a main moment: **attacking (BP)** or **defending (BPO)**
- Focusing on a core skill for a 2-week period will enable coaches to plan, prepare and deliver sessions that meet the needs and abilities of your players through on-going observation during training and matches
- Provides adequate time for players to retain information on a focused core skill during training and games
- Novice coaches are advised to gain support from a mentor coach, such as, a Club Coach Co-ordinator and use this manual to gain more ideas for session content
- Developing coaches are advised to attend **AFC/FFA Coach Education Courses**, gain support from a more experienced coach and use this manual to modify ideas for session content that suit the needs and abilities of your players
- Experienced coaches are advised to continue to attend **AFC/FFA Coach Education Courses**, support less experienced coaches and use this manual to create ideas for session content that suit the needs and abilities of your players
- A program has been created for coaches delivering a Skill Acquisition Phase program for 1, 2 or 3 sessions per week with an equal balance of the core four skills and main moment: **attacking** or **defending**

TERM PLANNER: 1 SESSION PER WEEK

SCHEDULE	CORE SKILL/S-S-G	MAIN MOMENT	WEEKEND
WEEKS 1-2	First Touch	Week 1: Attacking Week 2: Defending	MATCH
WEEKS 3-4	Striking the ball	Week 3: Attacking Week 4: Defending	MATCH
WEEK 5	Small Sided Games	Week 5: Attacking	MATCH
WEEKS 6-7	Running with the ball	Week 6: Attacking Week 7: Defending	MATCH
WEEKS 8-9	1v1	Week 8: Attacking Week 9: Defending	MATCH
WEEK 10	Small Sided Games	Week 10: Defending	MATCH

TERM PLANNER: 2 SESSIONS PER WEEK

SCHEDULE	1ST SESSION	2ND SESSION	WEEKEND
WEEKS 1-2	First Touch Attacking	First Touch Defending	MATCH
WEEKS 3-4	Striking the ball Attacking	Striking the ball Defending	MATCH
WEEK 5	Small Sided Games Attacking	Small Sided Games Defending	MATCH
WEEKS 6-7	Running with the ball Attacking	Running with the ball Defending	MATCH
WEEKS 8-9	1v1 Attacking	1v1 Defending	MATCH
WEEK 10	Small Sided Games Attacking	Small Sided Games Defending	MATCH

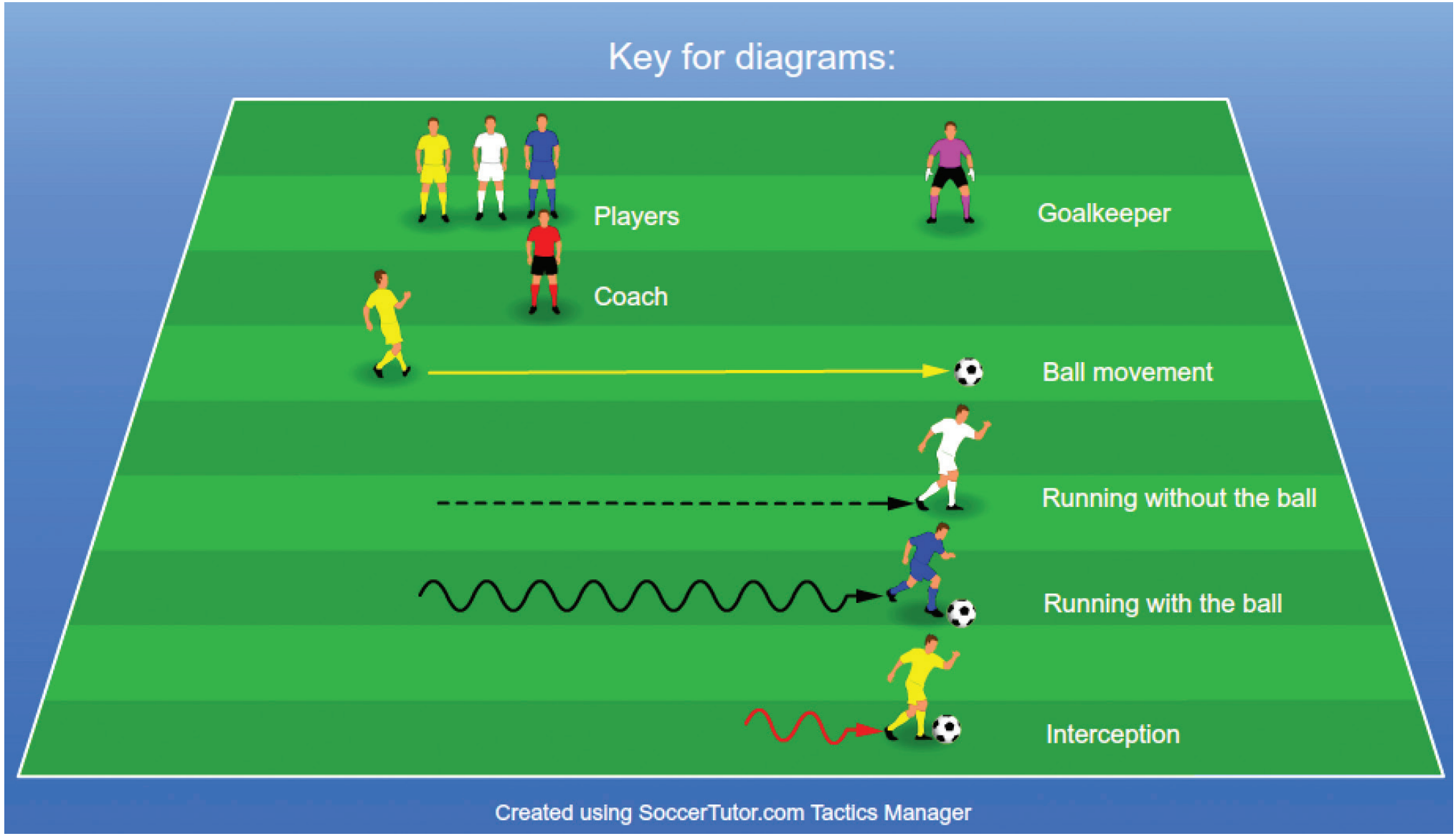
TERM PLANNER: 3 SESSIONS PER WEEK

SCHEDULE	1ST SESSION	2ND SESSION	3RD SESSION	WEEKEND
WEEKS 1-2	First Touch Attacking	First Touch Defending	First Touch Consolidation	MATCH
WEEKS 3-4	Striking the ball Attacking	Striking the ball Defending	Striking the ball Consolidation	MATCH
WEEK 5	Small Sided Games Attacking	Small Sided Games Defending	Small Sided Games Consolidation	MATCH
WEEKS 6-7	Running with the ball Attacking	Running with the ball Defending	Running with the ball Consolidation	MATCH
WEEKS 8-9	1v1 Attacking	1v1 Defending	1v1 Consolidation	MATCH
WEEK 10	Small Sided Games Attacking	Small Sided Games Defending	Small Sided Games Consolidation	MATCH

EXAMPLE SESSIONS

BBFC
RULES CLUB
WAGGA
mitre

EXAMPLE SESSIONS



EXAMPLE SESSIONS

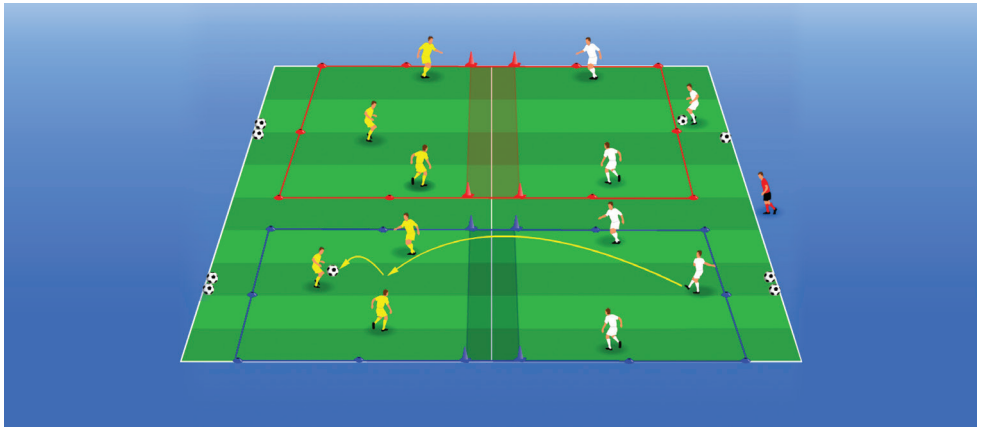
CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Suggested equipment list	List of suggested materials to deliver the session
Grid size	Recommended dimensions
Explanation	Step by step process to deliver practice
Scoring system	Points to encourage certain actions from players
Variations	Recommended changes to make it easier or harder
Rotation	Recommended system to swap role of players
Key Coaching Points	Encouraging and praising certain actions
Key Coaching Questions	Set of questions to help develop thinking players
Key Coaching Words	Child-friendly words to remind players of certain actions to help them achieve the best outcome

FIRST TOUCH

5-10 MINUTES

FUNctional Activity: Foot-volleyball

Receiving | Pressure



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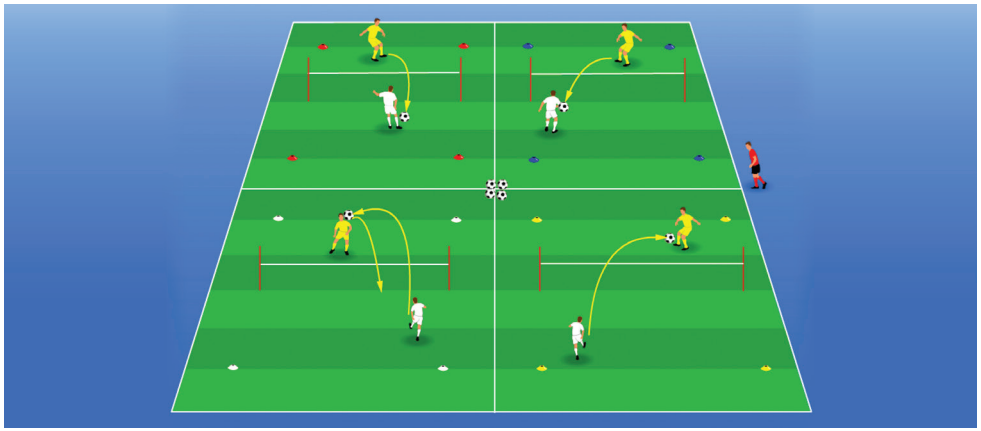

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Suggested equipment list:

- 30 cones, 8 portable poles, 12 balls, string, 2-4 portable goals, 2 sets of bibs

Grid size:

- Create two foot-volleyball grids (size based on ability levels)
- Create a 'net' using cones or poles (top picture)

Explanation:

- Divide players into teams of three (guide only)
- This is a game with volleyball rules
- Play starts with a volley from behind the base-line (closer for lower ability)
- Teams allowed 3 touches and only 1 bounce to get ball over (guide only)

Scoring system:

- Volleyball rules- first to 10 points wins the game

Variations: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Change number of touches and bounces to cater for your players' abilities
- Juggle in pairs over the net (bottom picture; use poles with string)
- Co-operative game- longest rally between pairs or teams

Rotation:

- Swap opponent/s every 2 minutes (guide only)

Key Coaching Points:

- Encourage players to use all parts of their body: foot, thigh, head, chest
- Praise well controlled first touches
- Encourage teams to combine using well weighted first touches

FIRST TOUCH

10 MINUTES

Recognition Phase: Game

Receiving | Pressure

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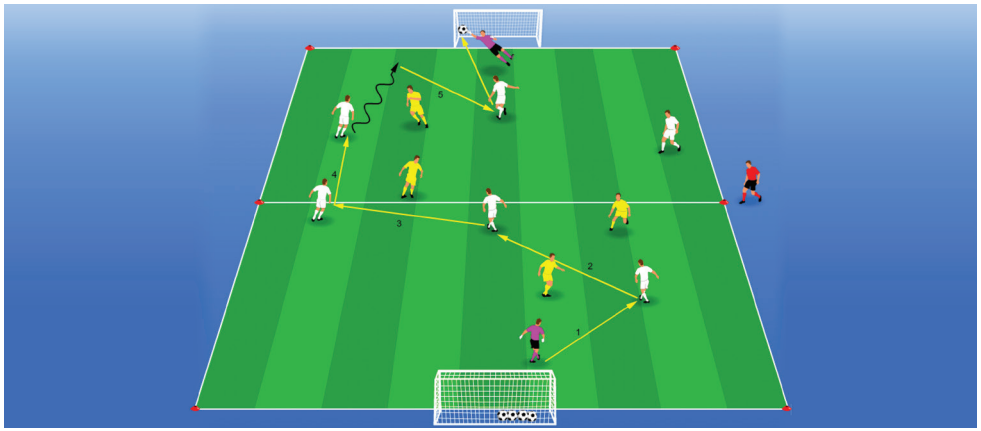

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Suggested equipment list:

- 30 cones, 8 portable poles, 12 balls, string, 2-4 portable goals, 2 sets of bibs

Grid size:

- Create a 30 x 40 metre game (guide only)

Explanation:

- Divide squad into 2 teams: 6 + GK versus 4 + GK for a squad of 12
- Teams to play normal game rules for the first five minutes
- To maximise game time, there is the option for the goalkeeper (white) with the overload of players to start/re-start play (place balls near his/her goal)

Scoring system:

- Regular rules for first five minutes; all goals worth 1 point
- After 5 minutes, reward 3 points for a goal scored by white team after five successful passes. This 'incentive' maximises first touch practice attempts
- The yellow team get 2 goals for scoring a goal after they win it back

Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Reduce/increase number of passes for bonus points

Rotation:

- Rotate roles of attacking and defending players (guide only)
- Rotate roles of the two goalkeepers after 5 minutes

Key Coaching Points:

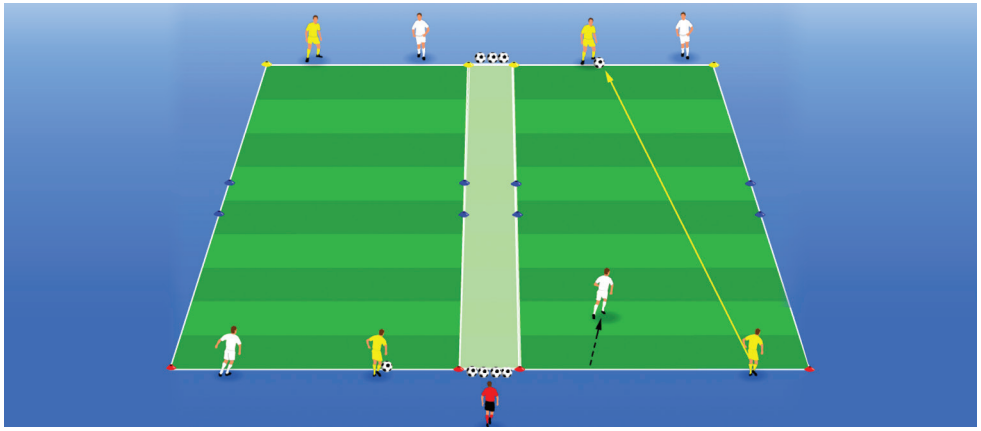
- Encourage players to take their first touch 'on the move' toward the goal
- Praise well controlled first touches that set up their next action
- Encourage players to take their first touch 'out of their feet'

FIRST TOUCH

5-10 MINUTES
Recommended

Intervention: Skill Breakdown (Attacking)

Receiving



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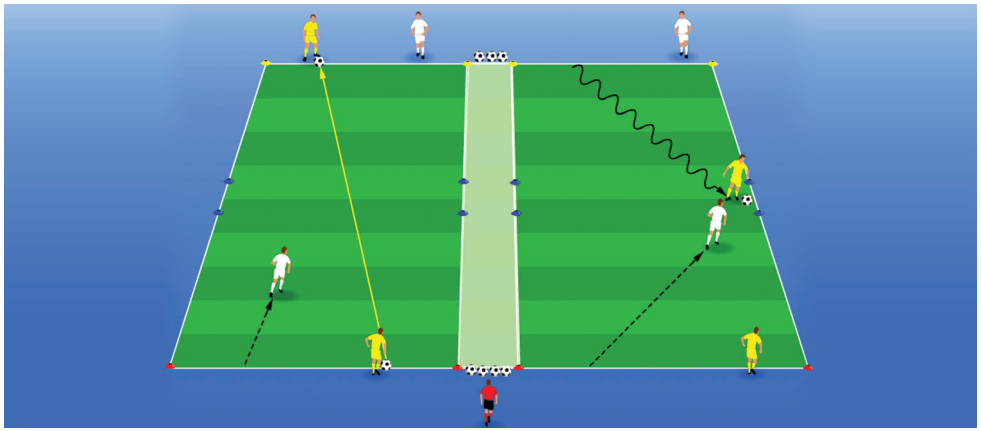

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Suggested equipment list:
- 30 cones, 8 portable poles, 12 balls, string, 2-4 portable goals, 2 sets of bibs

Grid size:
- Create 15 x 7 metre grids with 2 small side gates as shown (guide only)

Explanation:
- Position 4 players per grid in two teams, with one player from each team on opposing ends (top picture)
- Game starts when yellow player passes to his/her team-mate
- As the pass is played, the white defender from the side the ball is played in is allowed to enter the grid to defend in a 1v1 duel

Scoring system for attacker:
- 2 points for dribbling the ball to any side gate

Scoring system for the defender:
- 1 point for winning the ball and dribbling to any side gate or attacker's starting line

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***
- Swap roles of attacker and defender regularly.
- Attacker and defender to start from different angles and distances

Key Coaching Questions:
- **Pre-action:** Can you move towards the ball? Can you keep your head up to see your opponent?
- **Action:** Are you able to control the ball into the space away from the defender?
- **Post-action:** Can you push the ball in direction of next movement?

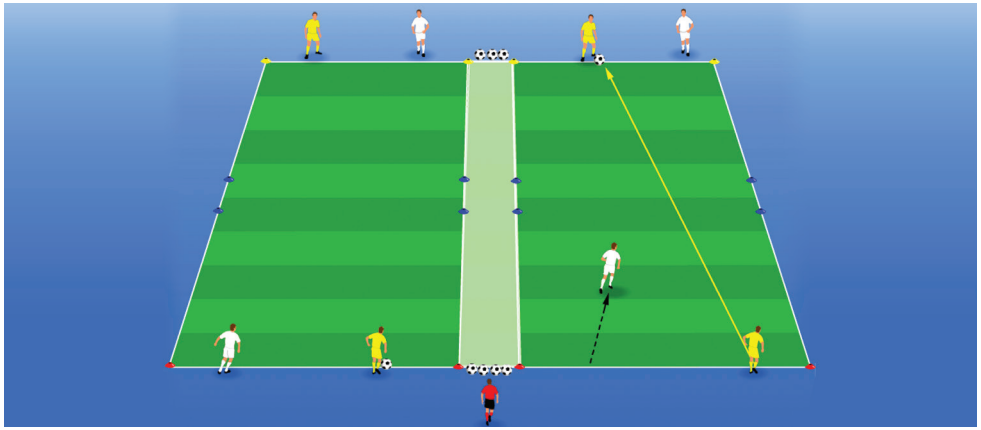
Key Coaching Words:
- **Available** - encourage moving towards the ball
- **Scan** - encourage players to keep head up with vision on opponent
- **Away** - encourage players to control the ball away from defender/s reach

FIRST TOUCH

5-10 MINUTES
Recommended

Intervention: Skill Breakdown (Defending)

Pressure



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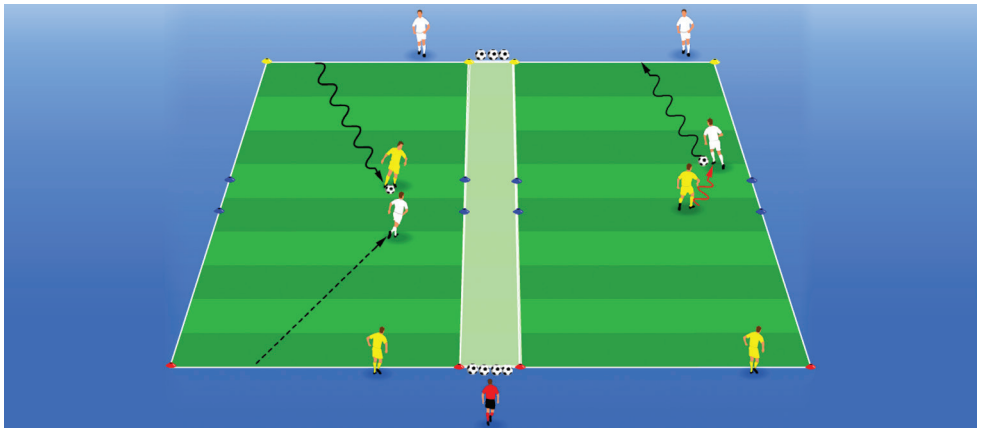

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Suggested equipment list:

- 30 cones, 8 portable poles, 12 balls, string, 2-4 portable goals, 2 sets of bibs

Grid size:

- Create 15 x 7 metre grids with 2 small side gates as shown (guide only)

Explanation:

- Position 4 players per grid in two teams, with one player from each team on opposing ends (top picture)
- Game starts when yellow player passes to his/her team-mate
- As the pass is played, the white defender from the side the ball is played is allowed to enter the grid to defend in a 1v1 duel

Scoring system for the defender:

- 2 points for winning the ball and dribbling to any side-gate or attacker's starting line

Scoring system for attacker:

- 1 point for dribbling the ball to any side gate

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Swap roles of attacker and defender regularly
- Attacker and defender to start from different angles and distances

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can you apply immediate pressure on the ball carrier? Can you arrive on touch?
- **Action:** Can you win the ball when a heavy touch is taken?
- **Post-action:** Are you able to counter-attack with speed?

Key Coaching Words:

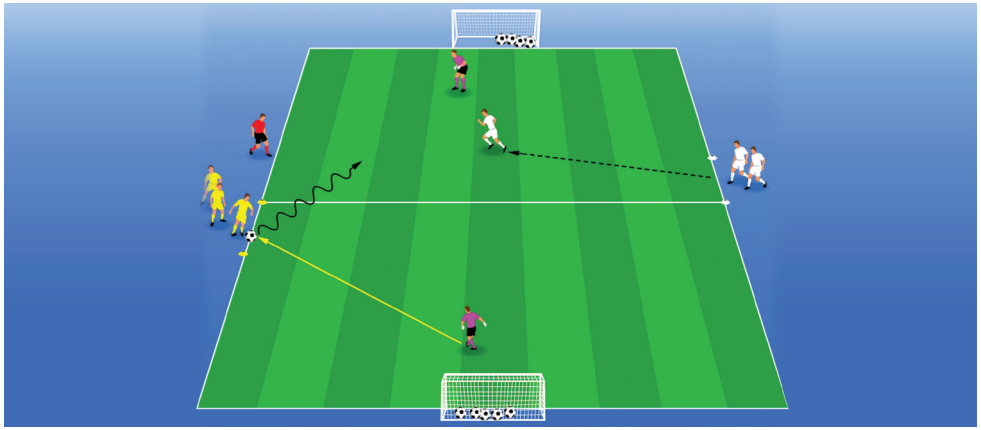
- **Press -** encourage defender to apply immediate pressure on ball carrier
- **Challenge -** encourage a challenge for the ball when a heavy touch is taken
- **Fast-break -** encourage counter-attack with speed

FIRST TOUCH

15-20 MINUTES

Application: Mini-Games

Receiving | Pressure



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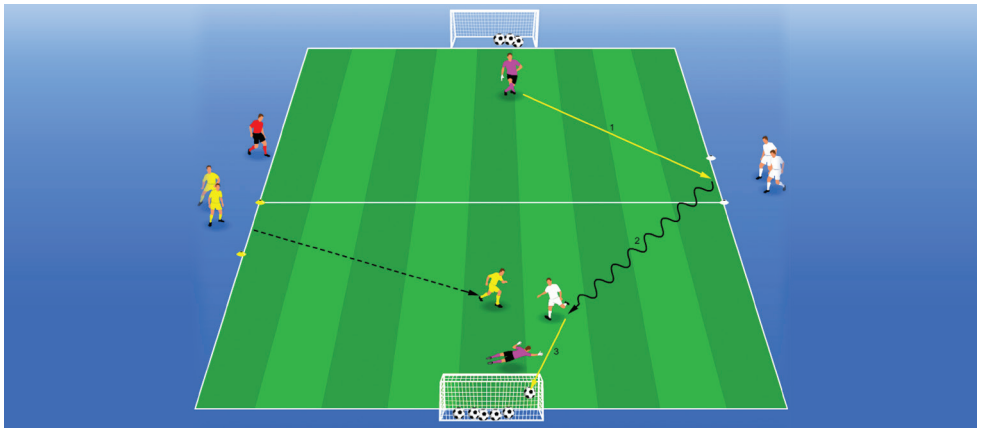

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Suggested equipment list:

- 30 cones, 8 portable poles, 12 balls, string, 2-4 portable goals, 2 sets of bibs

Grid size:

- Create 15 x 20 metre grid with goals on each end (guide only)

Explanation:

- Split participants into 2 equal teams and position them behind each side-gate as shown. Each team has a goalkeeper that protects their goal
- GK starts the game by passing to their team-mate on the left side-gate and aims to score a goal against the opposition GK
- As the ball is travelling, the defender is allowed to exit the other side-gate to apply pressure on the attacker
- If defender wins the ball, he/she can attack the opposite goal to score
- Next ball is played by other GK after each attempt. Repeat sequence
- GK may be used to support the attacker to create 2v1 overload

Scoring system:

- 1 point for a goal. 1 point for GK for every save made
- 2 points for goal scored after taking first touch forward
- 3 points for defender to win the ball and score in the opposite goal

Variations/Progressions: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- 2v1 duels or 2v2 duels
- Attacker and defender start from different angles and distances

Key Coaching Points:

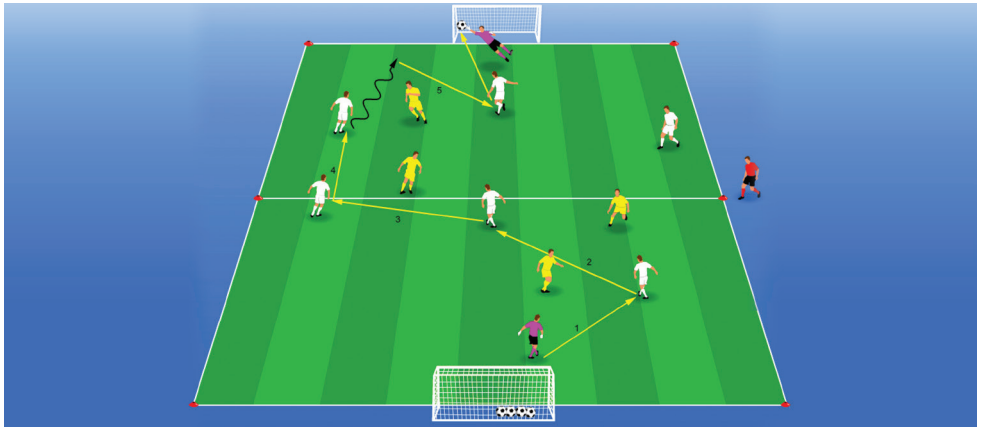
- *See Key Coaching Questions & Key Coaching Words* on pages 68 and 69

FIRST TOUCH

15-20 MINUTES

Evaluation Phase: Free Game

Receiving | Pressure



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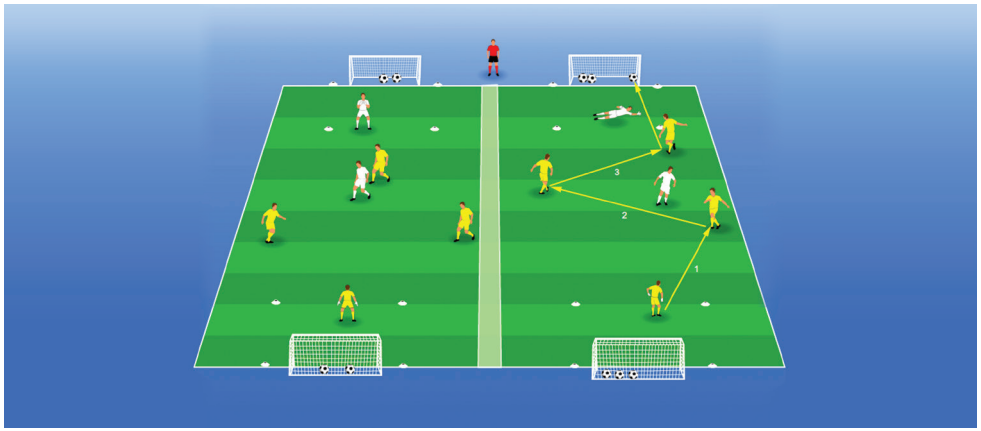

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Suggested equipment list:

- 30 cones, 8 portable poles, 12 balls, string, 2-4 portable goals, 2 sets of bibs

Grid size:

- Create a 30 x 40 metre game (guide only)

Explanation:

- Option to return to original recognition game (top picture) OR
- Divide squad into 4 equal teams. E.g. 2 games of 4v2 for a squad of 12
- Teams to play normal football rules
- To maximise game time, there is the option for the goalkeeper with the overload of players to start/re-start play (place balls near his/her goal)

Scoring system:

- The game is FREE of any restrictions or incentives; all goals worth 1 point

Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Equal number of players per team

Rotation:

- Rotate teams and roles of attackers, defenders and goalkeepers

Key Coaching Points: (refer to pages 68 and 69 for definitions)

Attackers

- Available
- Scan
- Away

Defenders

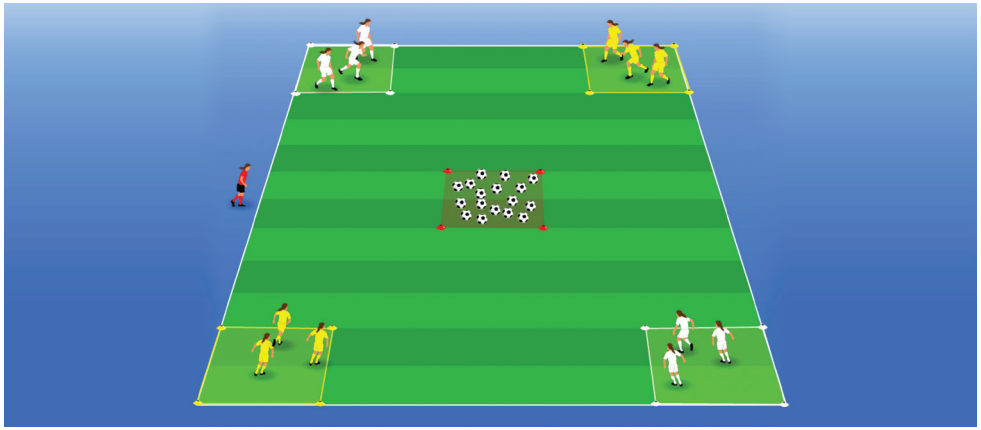
- Press
- Challenge
- Fast-break

STRIKING THE BALL

5-10 MINUTES

FUNctional Activity: Empty the nest

Passing accuracy | Interception



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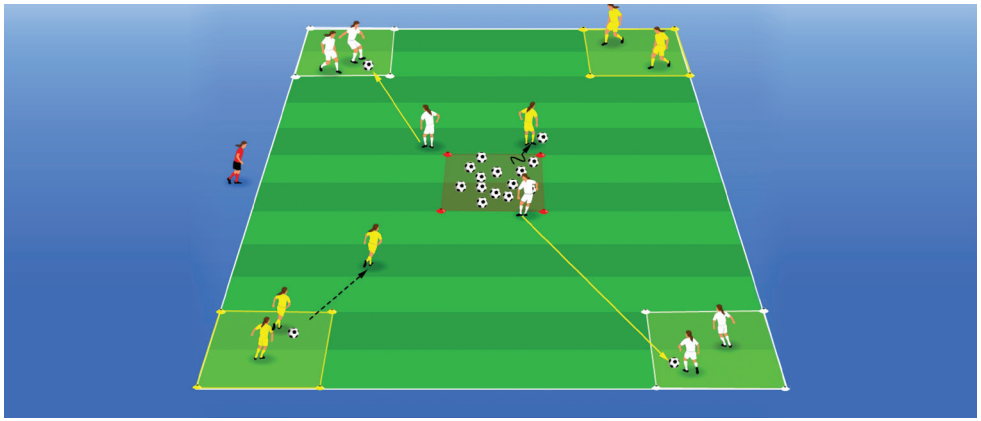

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 17 balls, 8-12 portable poles, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals

Grid size:

- Create four outside bases using cones
- Create one 'nest' in the middle filled with balls

Explanation:

- Divide players into four equal teams and position each team inside a base
- On coach's command, one player from each base sprint to the 'nest' to collect a ball and passes to their team-mate inside their base
- Only one ball can be moved at a time
- Passer returns to his/her base, tags next team-mate and they collect a ball
- Game continues until all balls have been removed from the 'nest'
- Team with the most balls in their base wins

Scoring system:

- When time is called, the team with the most balls in their base wins

Variations: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Once the 'nest' is emptied, players can rob balls from other bases (cannot stop someone robbing a ball from a base)
- Striking the ball only with the left foot and/or right foot

Key Coaching Points:

- Encourage players to face the target when striking the ball
- Praise efforts to strike the ball with different parts of their foot
- Encourage players to transfer weight forward when they strike the ball

STRIKING THE BALL

10 MINUTES

Recognition Phase: Game

Passing accuracy | Interception

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 17 balls, 8-12 portable poles, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals

Grid size:

- Create a 30 x 40 metre game (guide only)

Explanation:

- Divide squad into 2 equal teams: 6 versus 6 including GKs for a squad of 12
- Teams to play normal game rules for the first five minutes
- To maximise game time, there is the option for the goalkeepers to start/re-start play (place balls near the goals)

Scoring system:

- Regular rules for first five minutes; all goals worth 1 point
- After 5 minutes, reward 3 points for a goal scored by any team after five successful passes. This 'incentive' maximises passing practice attempts
- Any other goal scored is worth 1 point to allow freedom of expression

Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Reduce/increase number of passes for bonus points
- Neutral player/s for attacking team (1 or 2)
- Create two games of 3v3 including GKs for a squad of 12

Key Coaching Points:

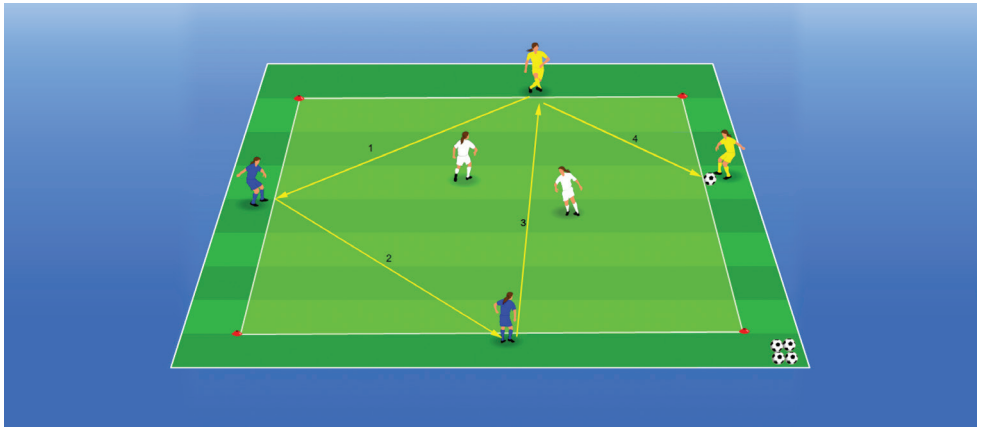
- Encourage players to face the target when striking the ball
- Praise efforts to strike the ball with different parts of their foot
- Encourage players to transfer weight forward when striking the ball

STRIKING THE BALL

5-10 MINUTES
Recommended

Intervention: Skill Breakdown (Attacking)

Passing accuracy



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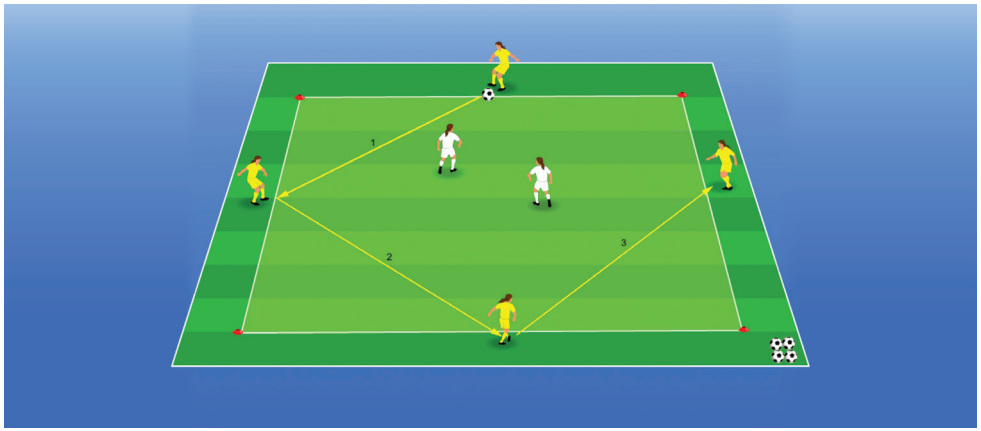

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 17 balls, 8-12 portable poles, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals

Grid size:

- Create 2: 10 x 10 metre grids (guide only)

Explanation:

- Split 6 participants into three pairs: yellow, blue and white (or 4v2 [bottom picture])
- Game starts with one team inside the grid (white) and two teams outside the grid
- Outside players can only move along their line; defenders free to move inside grid
- Outside players try to combine with each other to get as many passes as possible
- Pair of defenders try to win the ball by intercepting passes or forcing a mistake

Scoring system for attackers:

- 2 points for passing 10 times with outside players (guide only; based on ability levels)

Scoring system for the defenders:

- 1 point for intercepting a pass or forcing a mistake

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Swap role of defenders after winning the ball twice or set a time limit (guide only)

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can you face your target/s? Can you keep your head up to see your opponent?
- **Action:** Are you able to position your body square to the target?
- **Post-action:** Can you transfer your weight forward?

Key Coaching Words:

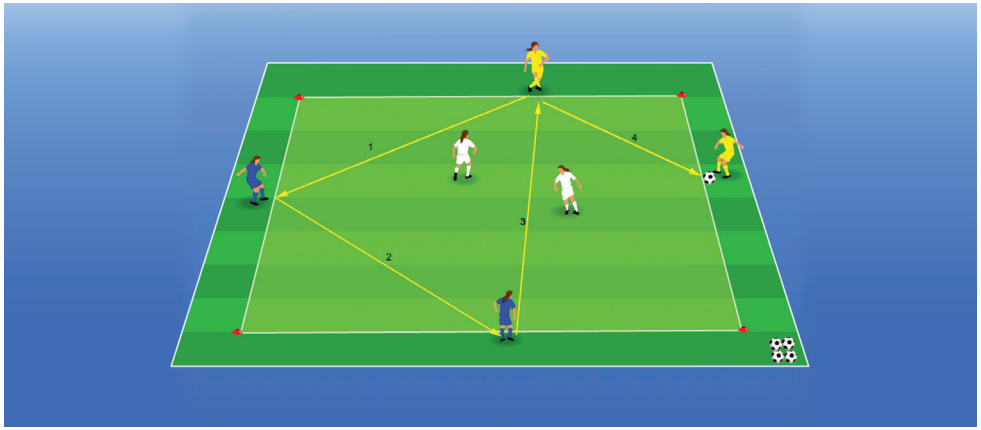
- **Face Forward -** encourage players to face forward to see the ball and goal/target
- **Scan -** encourage players to keep head up with vision on opponent
- **Follow through -** encourage players to transfer weight forward in follow-through

STRIKING THE BALL

5-10 MINUTES
Recommended

Intervention: Skill Breakdown (Defending)

Interception



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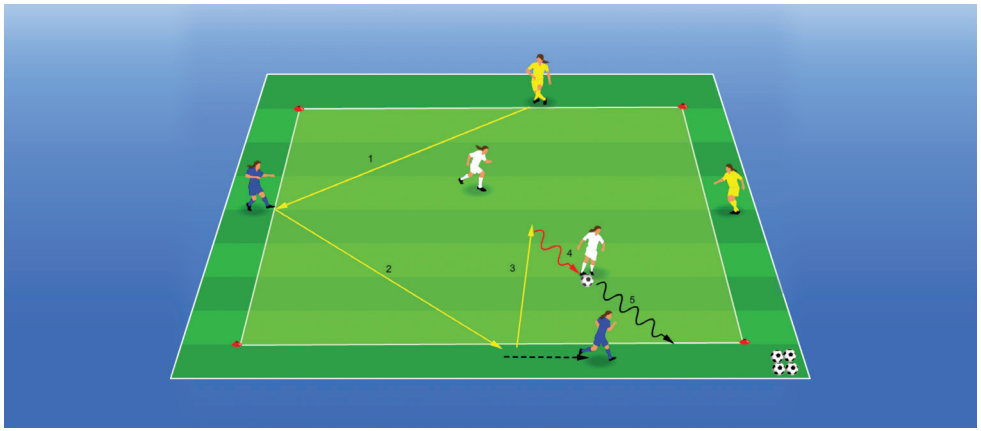

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 17 balls, 8-12 portable poles, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals

Grid size:

- Create 2: 10 x 10 metre grids (guide only)

Explanation:

- Same as the previous activity (Striking the ball: skill breakdown 'attacking')
- However, the defenders need to win the ball and dribble to any line for a bonus point
- Outside players allowed to stop defenders from reaching their line (see bottom picture)

Scoring system for the defenders:

- 2 points for winning the ball and dribbling to any line
- 1 point for intercepting a pass or forcing a mistake

Scoring system for the attackers:

- 1 point for passing 10 times with outside players (guide only; based on ability levels)

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Swap role of defenders after winning the ball twice or set a time limit (guide only)

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can the nearest defender apply immediate pressure on the ball carrier? Can the second defender cover the space behind the first defender?
- **Action:** Can the nearest defender win the ball when a heavy touch is taken? Can the second defender block the line to target?
- **Post-action:** Are you able to counter-attack with speed?

Key Coaching Words:

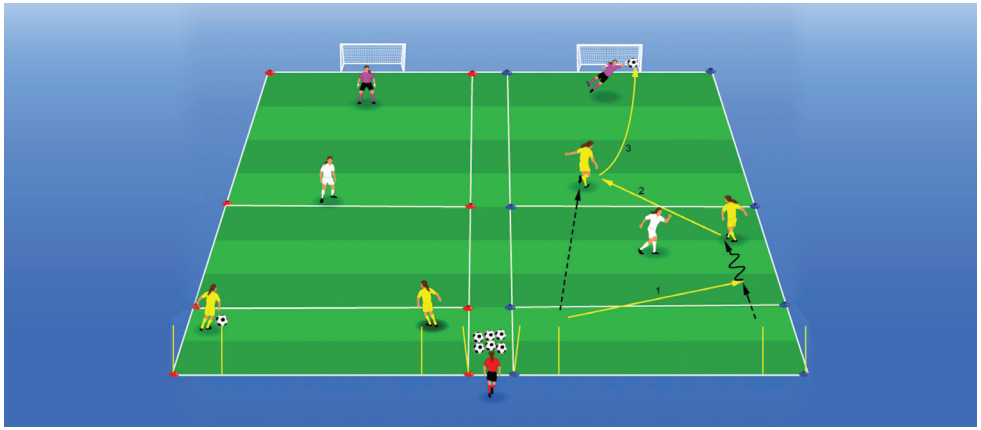
- **Press -** encourage nearest defender to apply immediate pressure on the ball carrier
- **Cover -** encourage second defender to cover space behind the first defender
- **Block -** encourage defenders to block line to target
- **Fast-break -** encourage counter-attack with speed

STRIKING THE BALL

15-20 MINUTES

Application: Mini-Games

Passing accuracy | Interception



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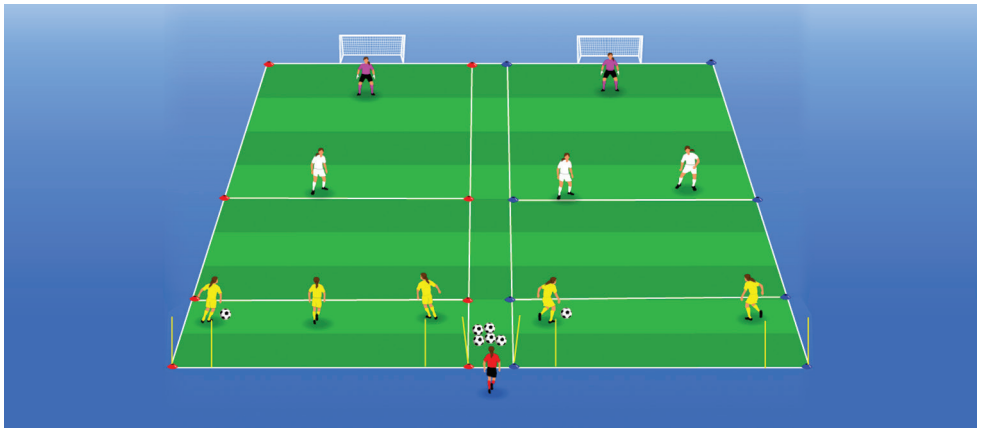


Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 17 balls, 8-12 portable poles, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals

Grid size:

- Create 3: 15 x 20 metre grids with a goal on one end and two side goals on the other end (guide only)

Explanation:

- Split participants into groups of 4: 2 attackers, a defender and a goalkeeper
- An attacker (yellow) starts the game by passing to their team-mate
- As the first pass is made, the defender (white) may move from starting position to apply pressure on attackers
- Attackers aim to combine and score past the goalkeeper
- If defender wins the ball, he/she can score by striking the ball through any of the two side gates

Scoring system:

- 1 point for a goal. 1 point for GK for every save made
- 2 points for goal scored after combining with at least three passes
- 3 points for defender to win the ball and score in the side goals

Variations/Progressions: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- 3v1 duels or 2v2 duels (bottom picture)
- Attacker/s and defender/s start from different angles and distances

Key Coaching Points:

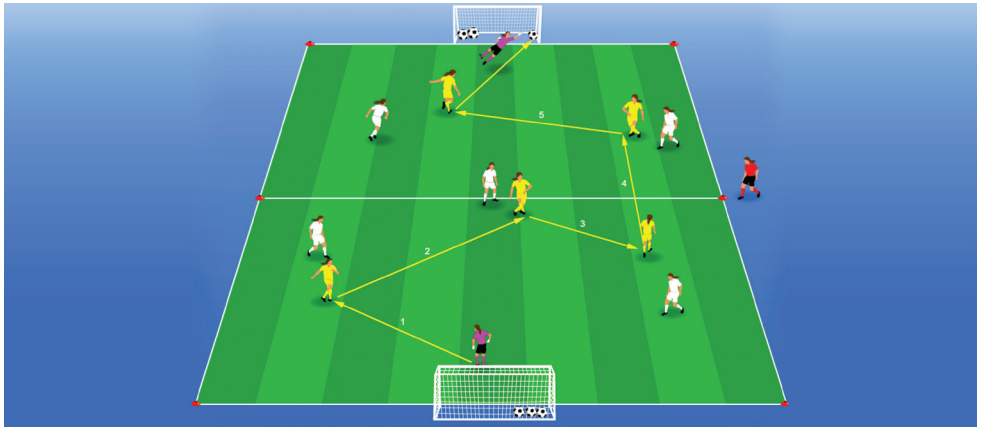
- *See Key Coaching Questions & Key Coaching Words* on pages 74 and 75

STRIKING THE BALL

15-20 MINUTES

Evaluation Phase: Free Game

Passing accuracy | Interception



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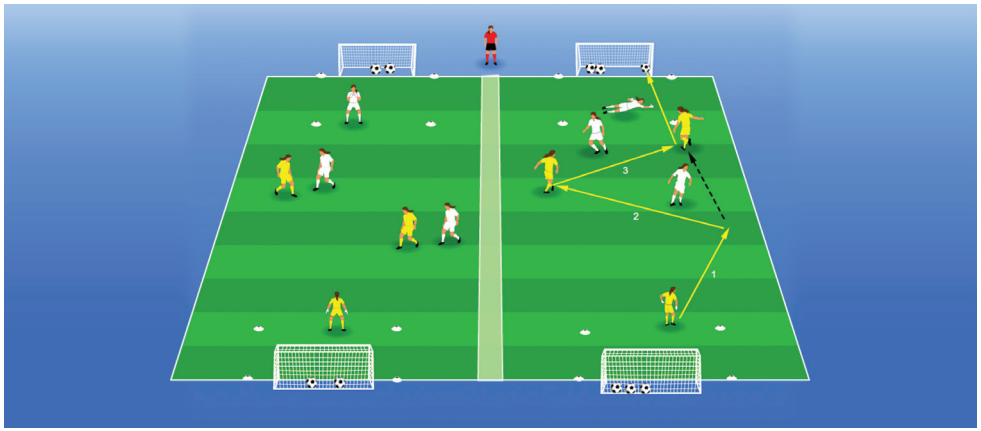

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 17 balls, 8-12 portable poles, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals

Grid size:

- Create a 30 x 40 metre game (guide only)

Explanation:

- Option to return to original recognition game (top picture) OR
- Divide squad into 4 equal teams. E.g. 2 games of 3v3 for a squad of 12
- Teams to play normal football rules
- To maximise game time, there is the option for the goalkeepers to start/re-start play (place balls near the goals)

Scoring system:

- The game is FREE of any restrictions or incentives; all goals worth 1 point

Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Overload a team with more players (e.g. 7v5 or 2 games of 4v2)
- Add 1 or 2 floaters to help team in ball possession (attacking)

Key Coaching Words: (refer to pages 74 and 75 for definitions)

Attackers

- Face Forward
- Scan
- Follow through

Defenders

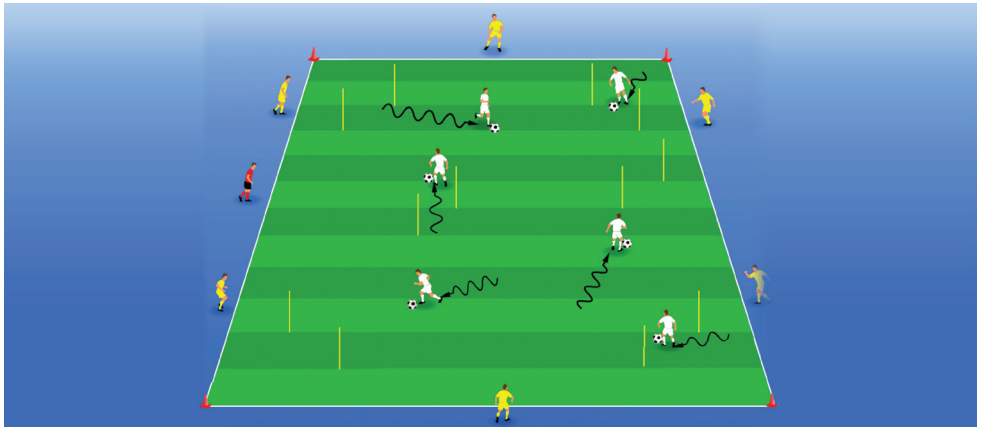
- Press
- Cover
- Block
- Fast-break

RUNNING WITH THE BALL

5-10 MINUTES

FUNctional Activity: 'Beat my record!'

Into Space | Challenge



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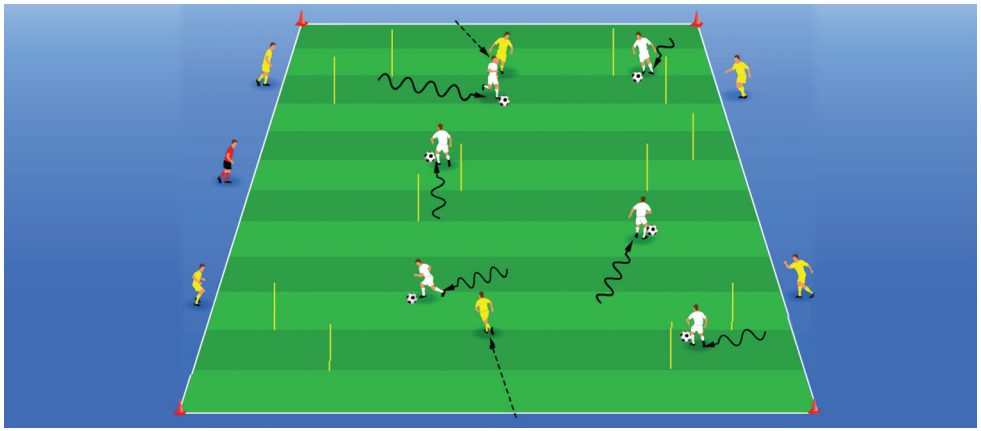

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals, 12 portable poles

Grid size:

- 25 x 25 metre grid with 6 gates inside the grid

Explanation:

- Divide players into two equal teams
- One team has a ball each (white) inside the grid and the other (yellow) team waits outside the grid without a ball
- On the coach's command (e.g. "GO" or whistle), the white players try to collect as many points as possible in 30 seconds by running with the ball through any of the 6 gates
- Players cannot pass through the same gate twice in a row
- Yellow team repeat sequence
- Organise for each player to have a direct opponent

Scoring system:

- Collect more points in 30 seconds than your direct opponent

Variations: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Add one or two 'taggers' to apply pressure on players (bottom picture)

Rotation:

- Swap direct opponent after every cycle

Key Coaching Points:

- Encourage players to take heavier touches into open space
- Praise efforts to keep the ball within control
- Encourage players to scan their surroundings

RUNNING WITH THE BALL

10 MINUTES

Recognition Phase: Game

Into Space | Challenge

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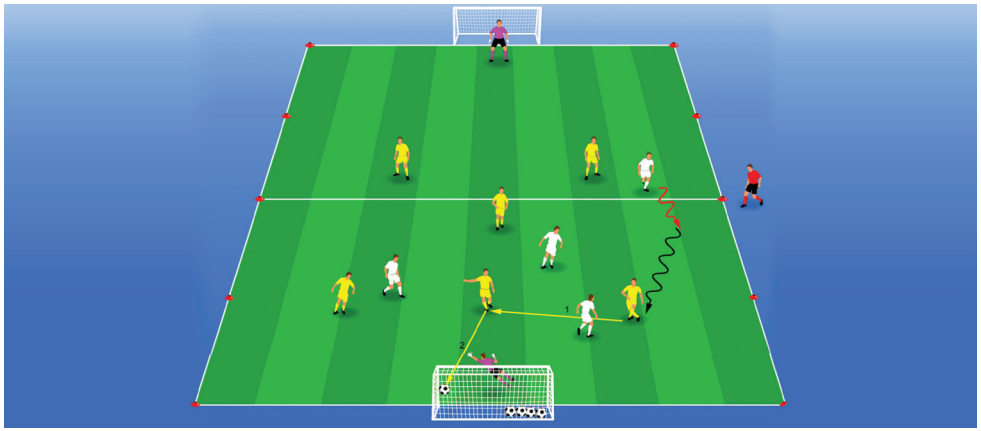


Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals, 12 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create a 30 x 40 metre game (guide only)

Explanation:

- Divide squad into 2 teams: 4 + GK versus 6 + GK for a squad of 12
- The white GK always starts/re-starts play (place balls nearby his/her goal)
- All players to start in their own half from re-starts

Scoring system:

- Regular rules for first five minutes; all goals worth 1 point
- After 5 minutes, reward 3 points for a goal scored by the yellow team after any player runs with the ball for at least 10 metres. This is an 'incentive'
- Any other goal scored by the yellow team is worth 1 point
- The white team get 2 points for scoring a goal

Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Reduce/increase required distance to run with the ball for bonus points
- Create two games of 1 + GK versus 3 + GK

Rotation:

- Rotate roles of attacking and defending players (guide only)
- Rotate roles of the two goalkeepers after 5 minutes

Key Coaching Points:

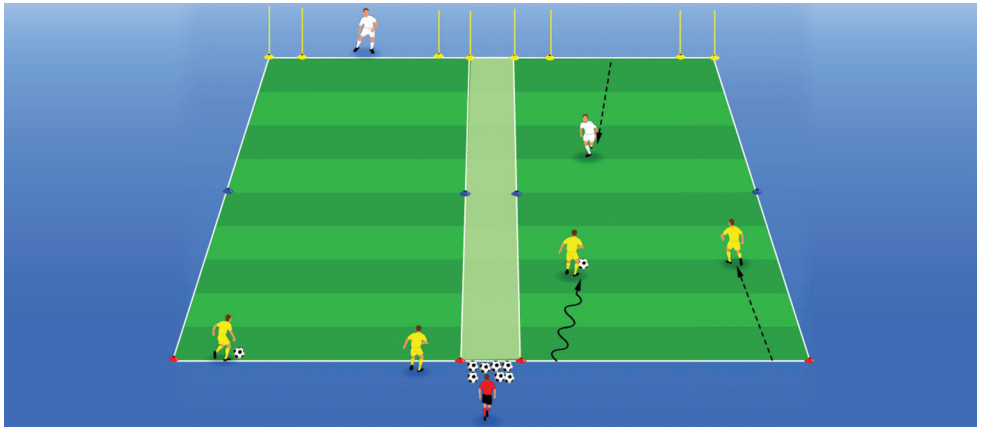
- Encourage players to take heavier touches into open space
- Praise efforts to keep the ball within control
- Encourage players to scan their surroundings

RUNNING WITH THE BALL

5-10 MINUTES
Recommended

Intervention: Skill Breakdown (Attacking)

Into Space



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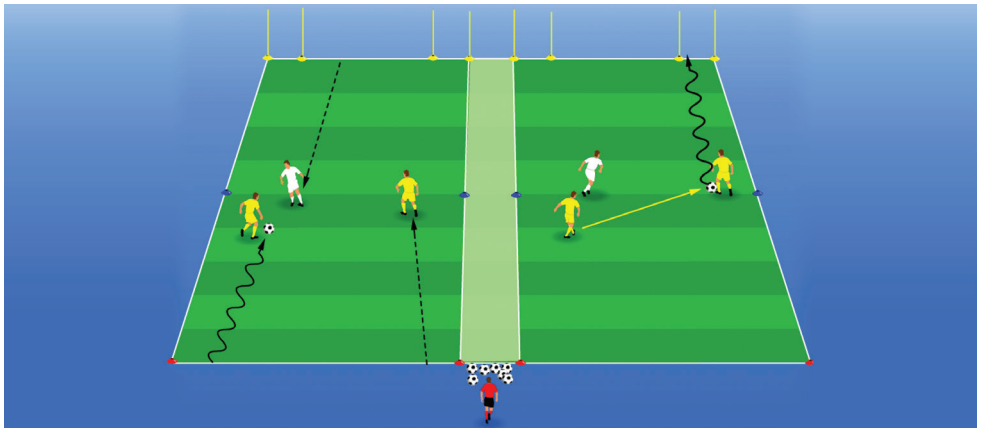


Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals, 12 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create 15 x 7 metre grids with two side goals as shown (guide only)

Explanation:

- Position 3 players per grid: 2 attackers versus 1 defender (top picture)
- Game starts when a yellow player runs with the ball inside the grid
- As the yellow player runs with the ball, the white defender from the opposite end is allowed to enter the grid to defend in a 2v1 duel

Scoring system for attackers:

- 2 points for running with the ball into any of the 2 side goals (bottom picture)

Scoring system for the defender:

- 1 point for winning the ball and running with it to the attackers' starting line

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Swap roles of attackers and defender regularly.

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can you keep the ball within your control? Can you keep your head up to see your opponent?
- **Action:** Are you able to take heavier touches into open space?
- **Post-action:** Can you sprint to the ball and push again?

Key Coaching Words:

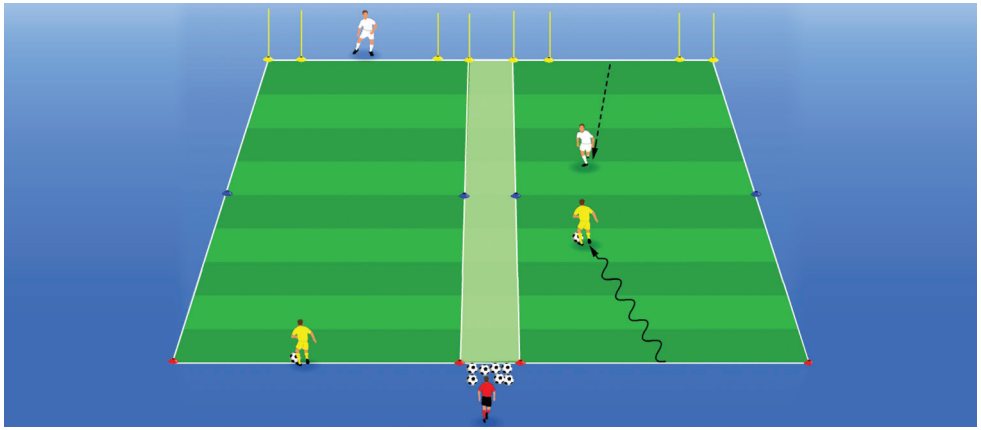
- **Scan -** encourage players to keep head up with vision on opponent
- **Big -** encourage players to take heavier touches into open space
- **Sprint -** encourage players to sprint to the ball and push again

RUNNING WITH THE BALL

5-10 MINUTES
Recommended

Intervention: Skill Breakdown (Defending)

Challenge



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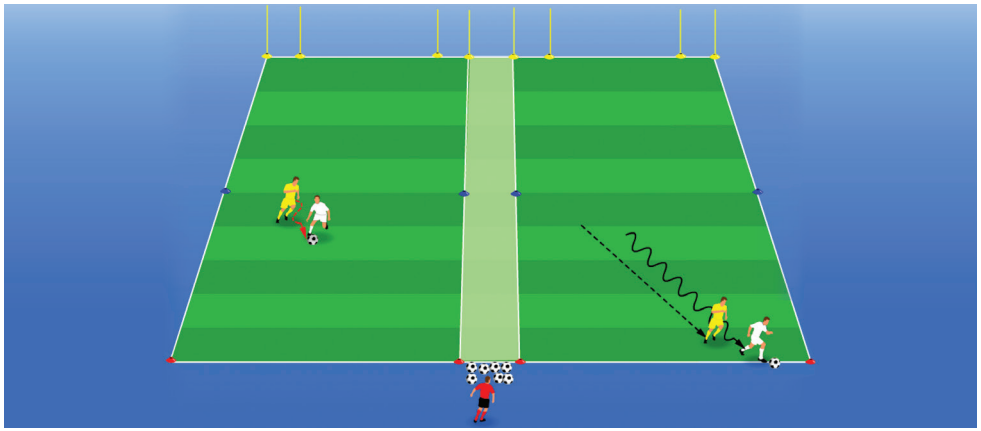


Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals, 12 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create 15 x 7 metre grids with two side goals as shown (guide only)

Explanation:

- Position 2 players per grid: 1 attacker versus 1 defender (top picture)
- Game starts when yellow player (attacker) runs with the ball inside the grid
- As the yellow player runs with the ball, the white defender from the opposite end is allowed to enter the grid to defend in a 1v1 duel

Scoring system for the defender:

- 2 points for winning the ball and running with it to the attacker's starting line

Scoring system for attacker:

- 1 point for running with the ball into any of the 2 side goals

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Swap roles of attacker and defender regularly
- Defender to start from different angles/distances (Inc. side or behind attacker)

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can you apply immediate pressure on the ball carrier?
- **Action:** Can you win the ball when a heavy touch is taken?
- **Post-action:** Are you able to counter-attack with speed?

Key Coaching Words:

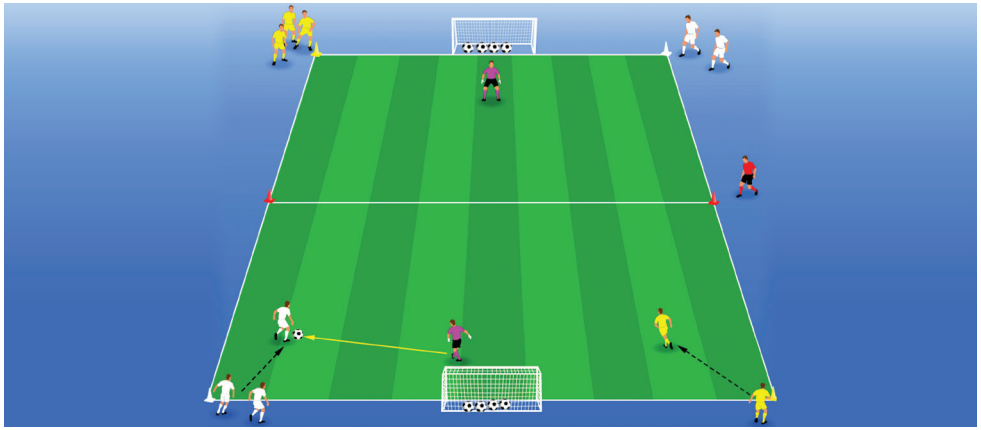
- **Press -** encourage defender to apply immediate pressure on the ball carrier
- **Challenge -** encourage a challenge for the ball when a heavy touch is taken
- **Fast-break -** encourage counter-attack with speed

RUNNING WITH THE BALL

15-20 MINUTES

Application: Mini-Games

Into Space | Challenge



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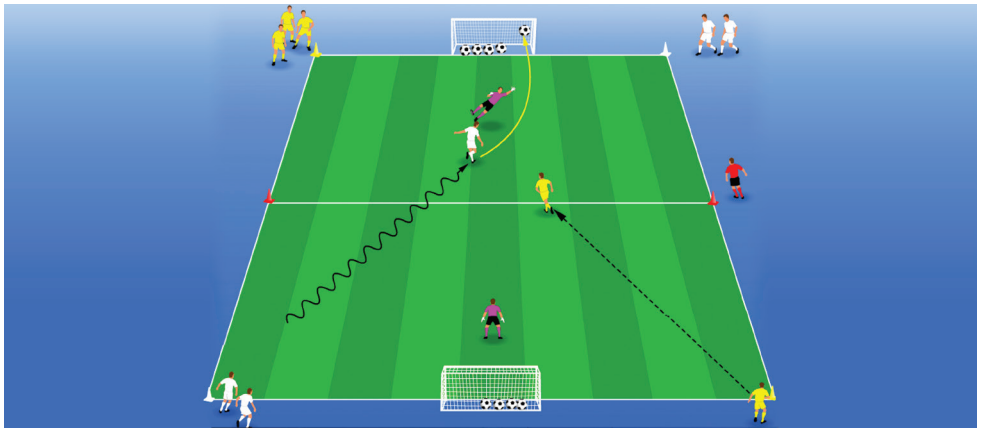


Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals, 12 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create 15 x 20 metre grid with goals on each end (guide only)

Explanation:

- Split participants into 2 equal teams and 2 GKs
- Split teams evenly and position team-mates diagonally facing each other
- GK starts play by passing to their team-mate on the same end (top picture)
- Yellow defender to chase white attacker from the same end (see pictures)
- Attacker attempts to score against opposite GK
- Next ball is played from opposite GK after each attempt. Repeat sequence
- If defender wins the ball, he/she can attack the opposite goal to score

Scoring system:

- 1 point for a goal. 1 point for GK for every save made
- 2 points for goal scored before chaser reaches half-way line
- 3 points for defender to win the ball and score in the opposite goal

Variations/Progressions: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- 2v1 duels or 2v2 duels

Rotation:

- Swap role of attackers and defenders after each cycle

Key Coaching Points:

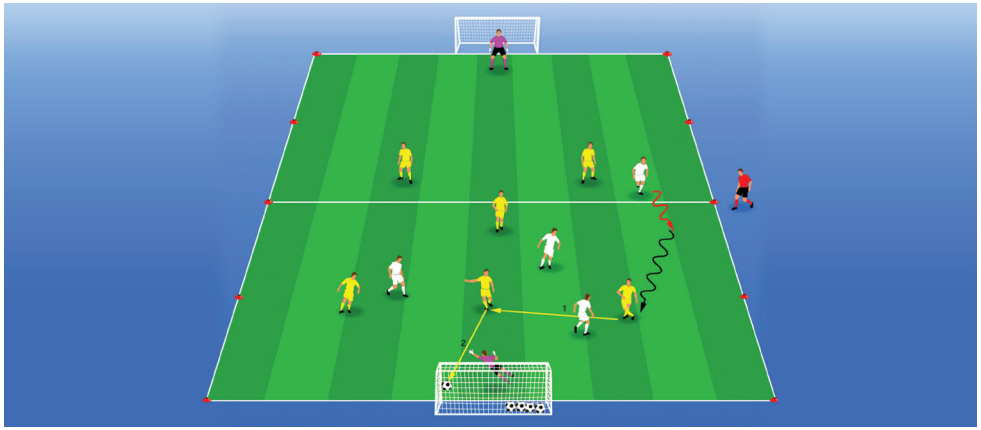
- See *Key Coaching Questions & Key Coaching Words* on pages 80 and 81

RUNNING WITH THE BALL

15-20 MINUTES

Evaluation Phase: Free Game

Into Space | Challenge



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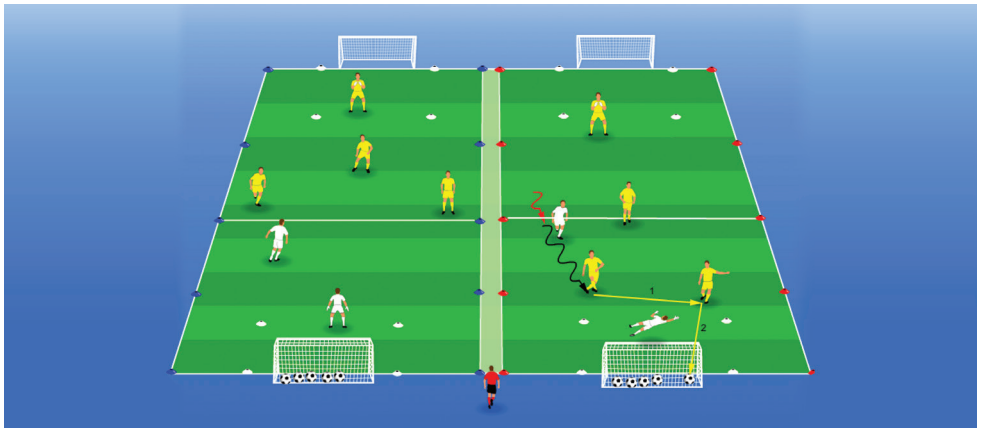


Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 2-4 portable goals, 12 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create a 30 x 40 metre game (guide only)

Explanation:

- Option to return to original recognition game (top picture)

OR

- Create 2 games of 1 + GK versus 3 + GK for a squad of 12 (bottom picture)
- All players to start in their own half from re-starts
- To maximise game time, the GK with the overload of players starts/re-starts play (place balls near his/her goal)

Scoring system:

- The game is FREE of any incentives; all goals worth 1 point

Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Equal number of players per team
- Rotate teams and roles of attackers, defenders & goalkeepers (guide only)

Key Coaching Words: (refer to pages 74 and 75 for definitions)

Attackers

- Scan
- Big
- Sprint

Defenders

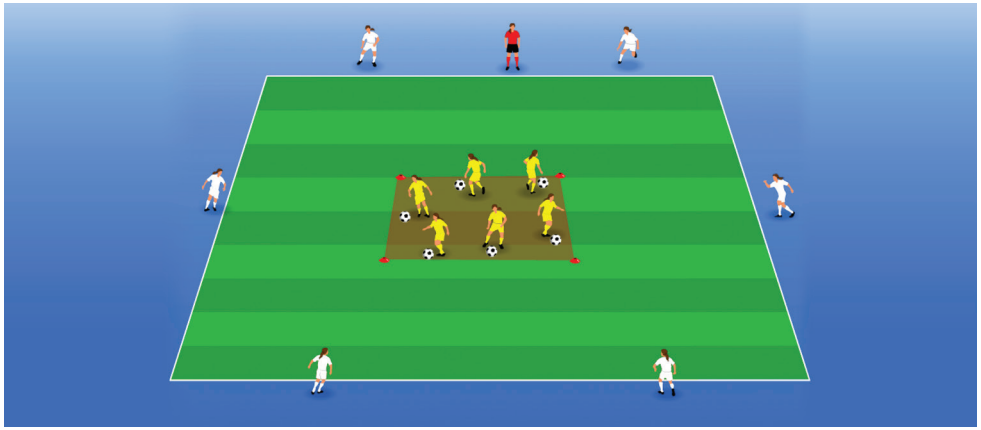
- Press
- Challenge
- Fast-break

1 V 1

15-10 MINUTES

FUNctional Activity: 'The Battle'

Beat defender | Win duel



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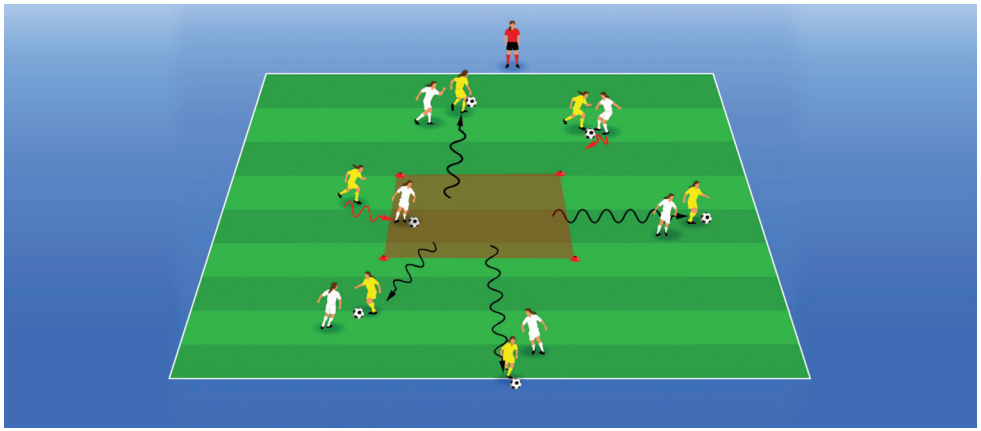


Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 4 portable goals or 8 portable poles

Grid size:

- 20 x 20 metre grid (guide only)
- Create a small square in the middle

Explanation:

- Divide players into two teams, one team inside the middle (red) square and the other team outside the big square
- Each yellow player in the middle square has a ball (refer to top picture)
- On the coach's command (e.g. "GO" or whistle), the yellow players in the middle dribble with the aim to reach any line of the big square
- White players aim to stop the yellow players from reaching any line

Scoring system:

- 1 point for yellow player for reaching any line of big square
- 2 points for white player if they win the ball and dribble into middle square
- Instruct players to keep their own score

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Swap role of teams after five attempts (guide only)

Key Coaching Points:

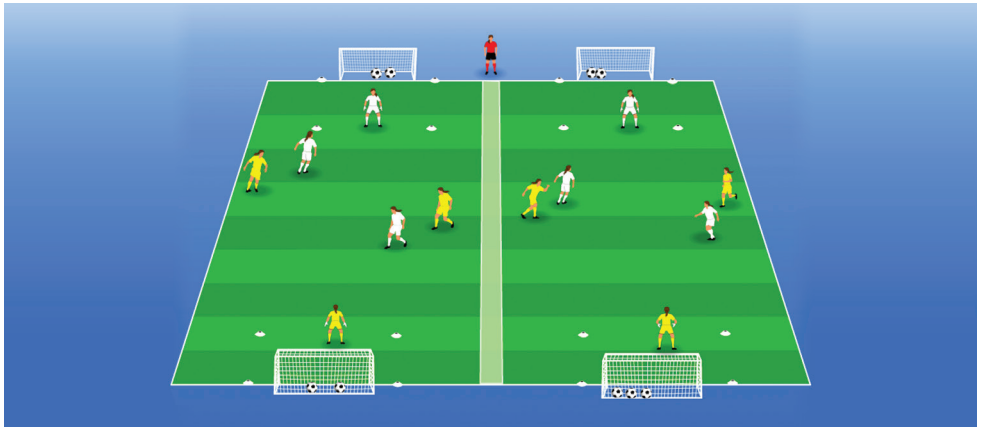
- Encourage players to engage in 1v1 duels
- Praise attempts to beat a defender
- Encourage players to work hard to win the ball back when they lose it

1 V 1

10 MINUTES

Recognition Phase: Game

Beat defender | Win duel



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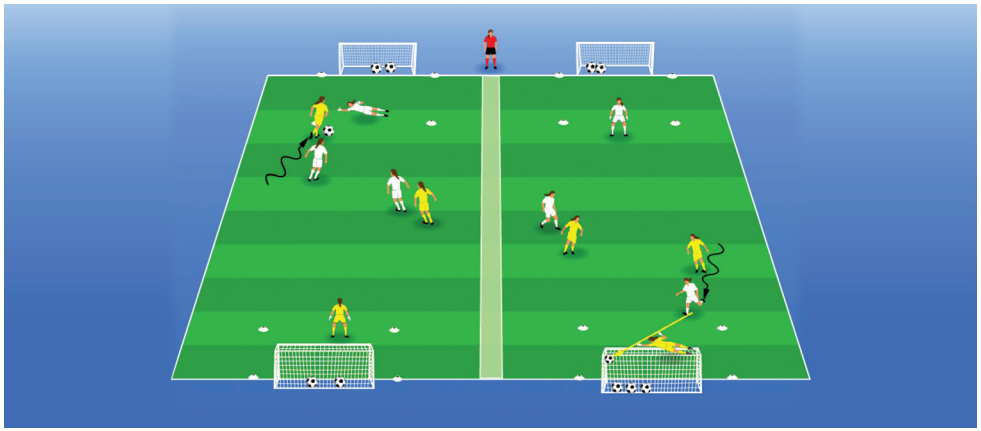

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 4 portable goals or 8 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create two: 15 x 20 metre games (guide only)
- Create penalty areas using cones

Explanation:

- Divide squad into 4 equal teams. E.g. 2 games of 3v3 for a squad of 12
- Teams to play normal game rules for the first five minutes
- To maximise game time, there is the option for the goalkeepers to start/re-start play (place balls near the goals)
- Every player needs to experience the role of the GK.

Scoring system:

- Regular rules for first five minutes; all goals worth 1 point
- After 5 minutes, reward 3 points for a goal scored after beating opponent in 1v1 duel. This creates 'incentive' for players to engage in 1v1 duels

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Rotate teams and swap role of the goalkeeper evenly (guide only)

Key Coaching Points:

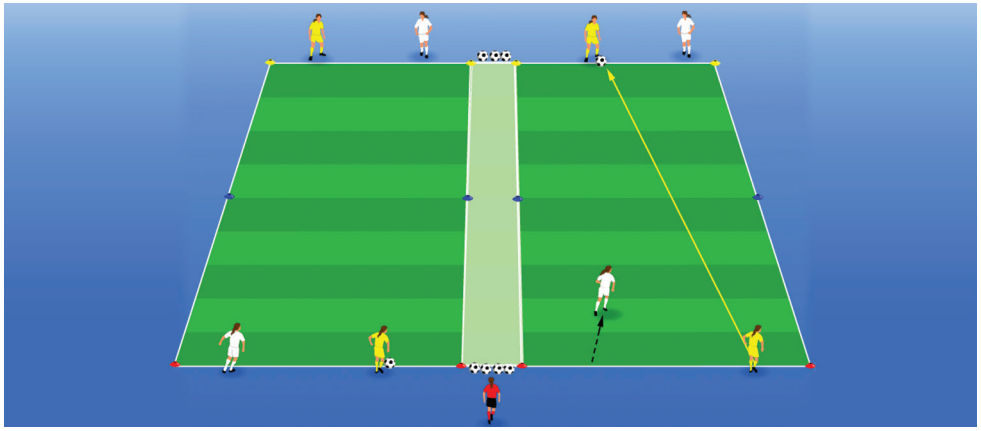
- Encourage players to engage in 1v1 duels
- Praise attempts to beat a defender
- Encourage players to work hard to win the ball back when they lose it

1 V 1

5-10 MINUTES
Recommended

Intervention: Skill Breakdown (Attacking)

Beat defender



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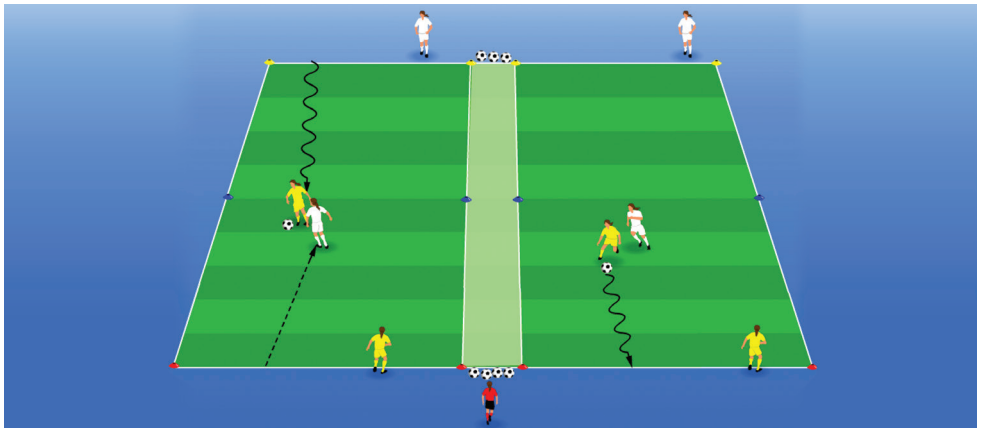


Created using SoccerTutor.com Tactics Manager

Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 4 portable goals or 8 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create 15 x 7 metre grids (guide only)

Explanation:

- Position 4 players per grid in two teams, with one player from each team on opposing ends (top picture).
- Game starts when yellow player passes to his/her team-mate
- As the pass is played, the white defender from the side the ball is played is allowed to enter the grid to defend in a 1v1 duel

Scoring system for attacker:

- 2 points for dribbling the ball over the defender's starting line

Scoring system for the defender:

- 1 point for winning the ball and dribbling over the attacker's starting line

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Swap roles of attacker and defender regularly.

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can you keep the ball close to your feet? Can you keep your head up to see your opponent?
- **Action:** Are you able to use body feints, change speed & direction to beat your opponent?
- **Post-action**: Can you accelerate past the defender?

Key Coaching Words:

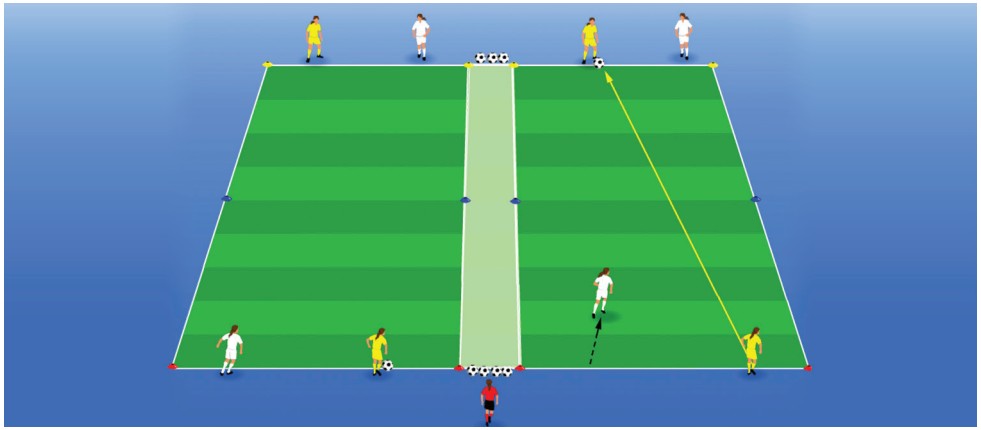
- **Glue -** encourage keeping the ball close to feet
- **Scan -** encourage players to keep head up with vision on opponent
- **Positive -** encourage players to use feints, change speed & direction to beat defender

1 V 1

5-10 MINUTES
Recommended

Intervention: Skill Breakdown (Defending)

Win duel



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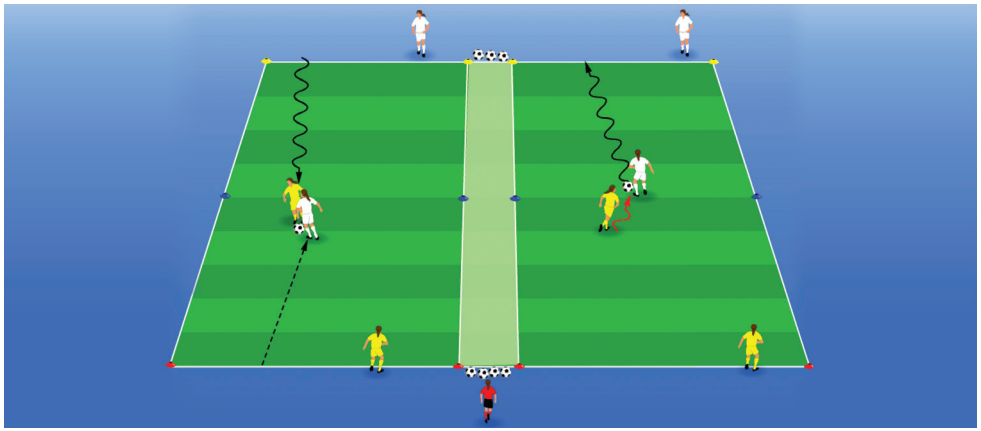

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 4 portable goals or 8 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create 15 x 7 metre grids (guide only)

Explanation:

- Position 4 players per grid in two teams, with one player from each team on opposing ends (top picture).
- Game starts when yellow player passes to his/her team-mate
- As the pass is played, the white defender from the side the ball is played is allowed to enter the grid to defend in a 1v1 duel

Scoring system for the defender:

- 2 points for winning the ball and dribbling over the attacker's starting line

Scoring system for attacker:

- 1 point for dribbling the ball over the defender's starting line

Rotation/Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Swap roles of attacker and defender regularly.

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can you block your opponents line to goal? Can you apply pressure on the ball carrier?
- **Action:** Can you win the ball when a heavy touch is taken?
- **Post-action:** Are you able to counter-attack with speed?

Key Coaching Words:

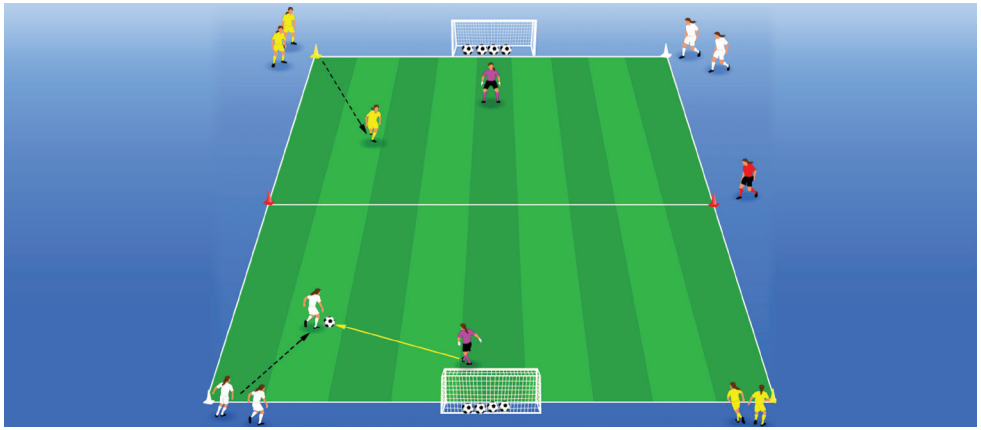
- **Surfboard/skateboard -** encourage standing 'side-on' to block direct line to goal
- **Challenge -** encourage a challenge for the ball when a heavy touch is taken
- **Fast-break -** encourage counter-attack with speed

1 V 1

15-20 MINUTES

Application: Mini-Games

Beat defender | Win duel



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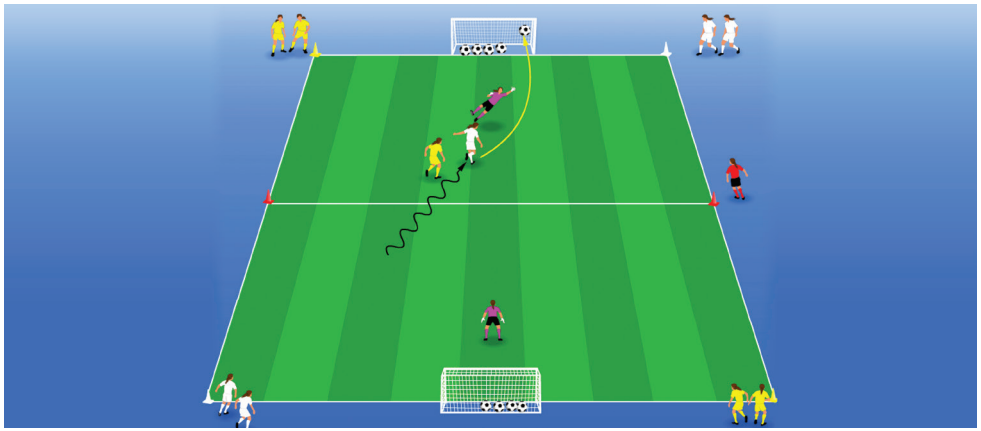

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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 4 portable goals or 8 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create 15 x 20 metre grid with goals on each end (guide only)

Explanation:

- Split participants into 2 equal teams and 2 GKs.
- Split teams evenly and position team-mates diagonally facing each other
- GK starts play by passing to their team-mate on the same end (top picture)
- Yellow defender to engage in 1v1 duel from opposite end (top picture)
- Attacker attempts to beat defender in 1v1 duel and score against the GK
- If defender wins the ball, he/she can attack the opposite goal to score
- Next ball is played from opposite GK after each attempt. Repeat sequence

Scoring system:

- 1 point for a goal. 1 point for GK for every save made
- 2 points for goal scored after beating defender in 1v1 duel
- 3 points for defender to win the ball and score in the opposite goal

Variations/Progressions: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- 2 balls (Chaos Game)
- 2v1 duels or 2v2 duels
- Attacker and defender to start from different angles and distances

Rotation:

- Swap role of attackers and defenders after each cycle

Key Coaching Points:

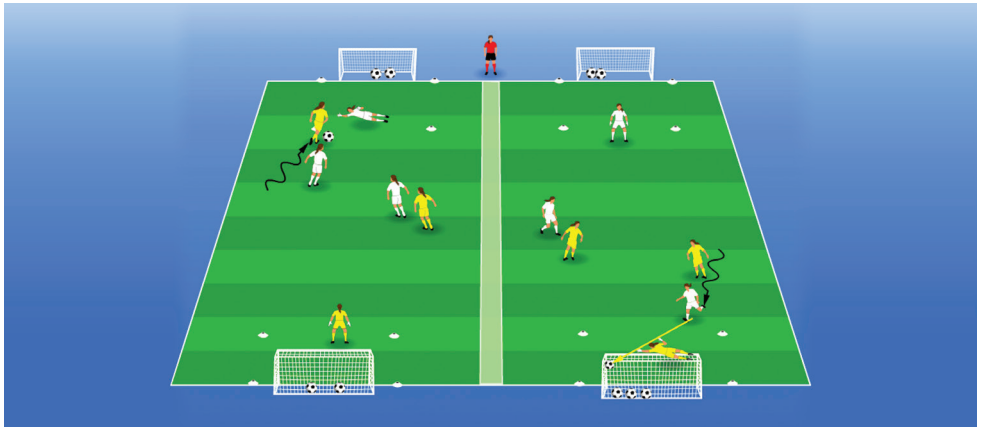
- See *Key Coaching Questions & Key Coaching Words* on pages 86 and 87

1 V 1

15-20 MINUTES

Evaluation Phase: Free Game

Beat defender | Win duel



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Suggested equipment list:

- 20 cones, 12 balls, 2 sets of bibs, 4 portable goals or 8 portable poles

Grid size:

- Create two: 15 x 20 metre games (guide only)
- Create penalty areas using cones

Explanation:

- Divide squad into 4 equal teams. E.g. 2 games of 3v3 for a squad of 12
- Teams to play normal football rules
- Option to return to original recognition game (top picture) or coach may opt to create one large game with all the players involved (bottom picture)
- To maximise game time, there is the option for the goalkeepers to start/re-start play (place balls near the goals)

Scoring system:

- The game is FREE of any restrictions or incentives; all goals worth 1 point

Rotation/Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Rotate teams and swap role of the goalkeeper evenly (guide only)

Key Coaching Words: (refer to pages 86 and 87 for definitions)

Attackers

- Glue
- Scan
- Positive

Defenders

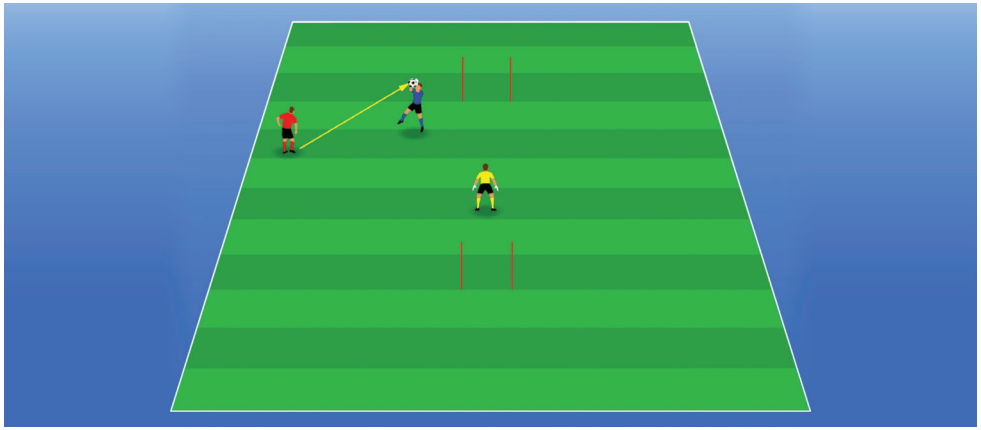
- Surfboard/skateboard
- Challenge
- Fast-break

GOALKEEPING

5-10 MINUTES
Optional

Intervention: Skill Breakdown

General Handling



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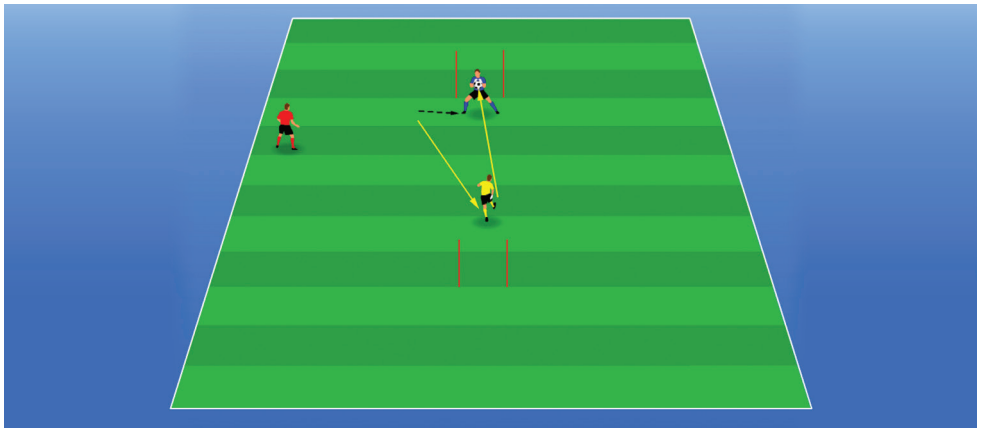

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Suggested equipment list:

- 4 portable poles, 1 or 2 balls (+ GK coach/assistant coach)

Grid size:

- Create gates using portable poles that are 2 metres wide (guide only)

Explanation:

- Position 2 goalkeepers as shown
- Game starts when coach passes to the blue goalkeeper protecting the near post
- The blue goalkeeper plays the ball into the space to the yellow goalkeeper
- As the pass is played, the yellow goalkeeper controls the ball then shoots the ball towards the blue goalkeeper's goal.

Scoring system for the defending goalkeeper:

- 1 point for making a clean save

Scoring system for attacking goalkeeper:

- 1 point for quality serve into the goalkeeper protecting the goal

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***

- Swap roles after each action

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can you look to adjust your position in relation to the ball? Can you get behind the line of the ball?
- **Action:** Can you select the correct technique to catch the ball?
- **Post-action:** Can you secure the ball?

Key Coaching Words:

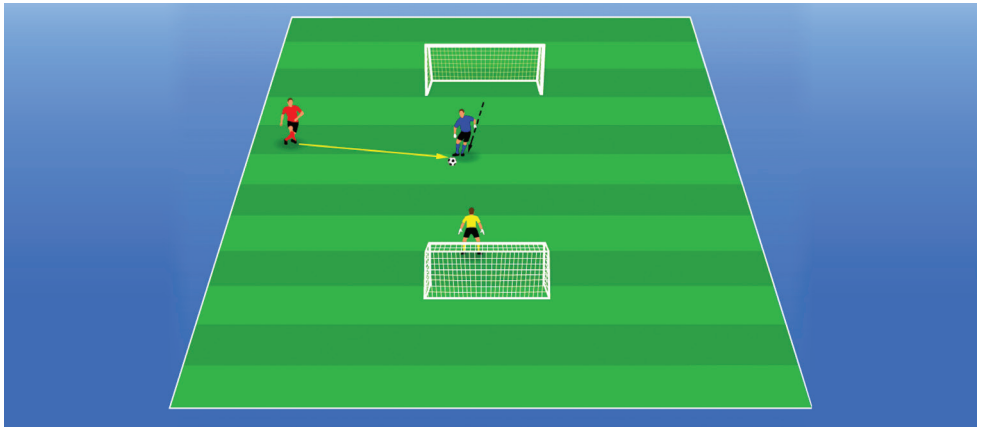
- **Adjust -** encourage goalkeeper to adjust to the position and movement of the ball
- **Set -** encourage goalkeeper to be set and still as shot is taken
- **Soft Hands -** encourage goalkeeper to be relaxed as they catch the ball

GOALKEEPING

5-10 MINUTES
Optional

Intervention: Skill Breakdown

1 v 1



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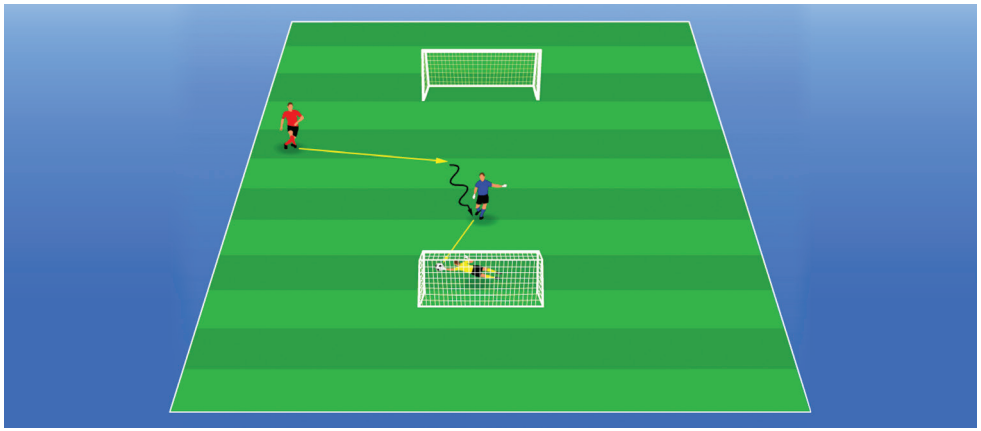

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Suggested equipment list:

- 2 mini-goals or 4 portable poles, 1 or 2 balls (+ GK coach/assistant coach)

Grid size:

- Use appropriate sized goals or portable poles inside 15 x 7 metre area (guide only)

Explanation:

- Position 2 goalkeepers as shown
- Game starts when coach passes into the area for the blue goalkeeper
- Blue goalkeeper controls ball and looks to score past the yellow goalkeeper
- As the pass is played, the yellow goalkeeper decides whether to defend the space or protect the goal

Scoring system for the defending goalkeeper:

- 1 point for making a clean save

Scoring system for attacking goalkeeper:

- 1 point for scoring a goal past the opposing goalkeeper

Rotation/Variation: *C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)*

- Swap roles after each action

Key Coaching Questions:

- **Pre-action:** Can you look to adjust position in relation to the ball? Can you get to the ball before the attacker?
- **Action:** Can you stay big and patient? Can you win the ball if you identify a poor touch?
- **Post-action:** Can you secure the ball?

Key Coaching Words:

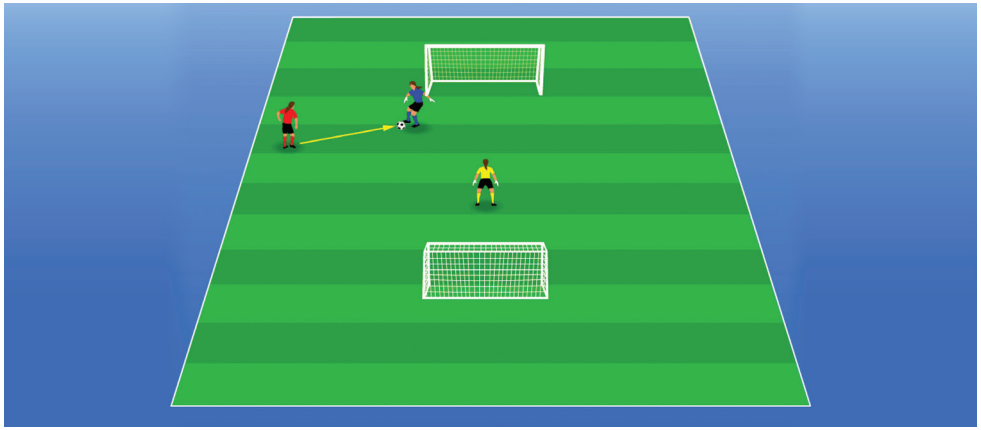
- **Adjust -** encourage goalkeeper to adjust to the position and movement of the ball
- **Set-** encourage goalkeeper to be set and still as attacker controls the ball
- **Stay Big-** encourage goalkeeper to stay big and not commit too early

GOALKEEPING

5-10 MINUTES
Optional

Intervention: Skill Breakdown

Shot Stopping



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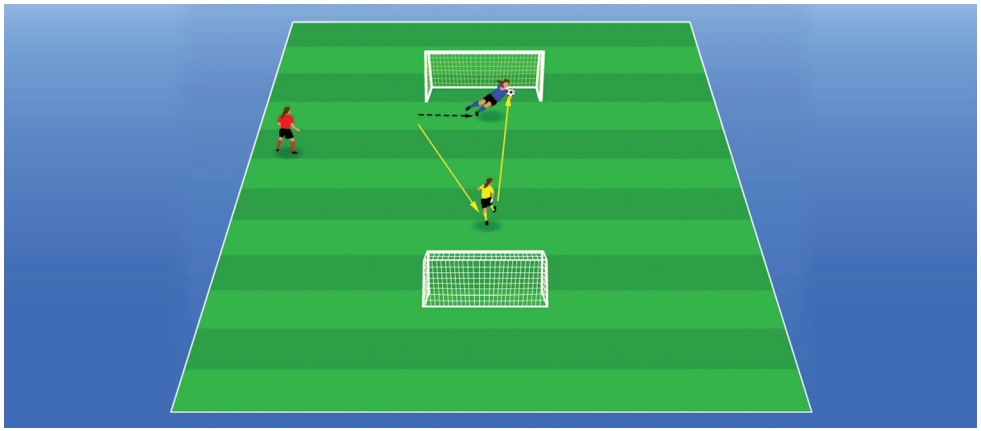

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Suggested equipment list:
- 2 mini-goals or 4 portable poles, 1 or 2 balls (+ GK coach/assistant coach)

Grid size:
- Use appropriate sized goals or portable poles inside 15 x 7 metre area (guide only)

Explanation:
- Position 2 goalkeepers as shown
- Game starts when coach passes to the blue goalkeeper's feet, protecting the near post
- The blue goalkeeper plays the ball into the space to the yellow goalkeeper
- As the pass is played, the yellow goalkeeper controls the ball then shoots the ball towards the blue goalkeeper's goal.

Scoring system for the defending goalkeeper:
- 1 point for making a clean save

Scoring system for attacking goalkeeper:
- 1 point for quality serve into the opposing goal

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***
- Swap roles after each action

Key Coaching Questions:
- **Pre-action:** Can you look to adjust position in relation to the ball? Can you get behind the line of the ball?
- **Action:** Can you select the correct technique to catch or parry the ball?
- **Post-action:** Can you secure the ball?

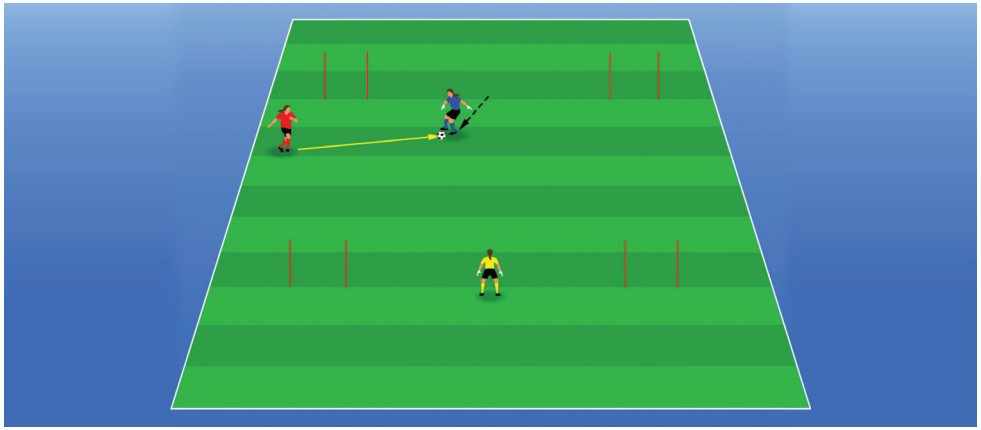
Key Coaching Words:
- **Adjust -** encourage goalkeeper to adjust to the position and movement of the ball
- **Set -** encourage goalkeeper to be set and still as shot is taken
- **Lead with the hands -** encourage goalkeeper to lead with their hands towards the ball

GOALKEEPING

5-10 MINUTES
Optional

Intervention: Skill Breakdown

Striking the ball



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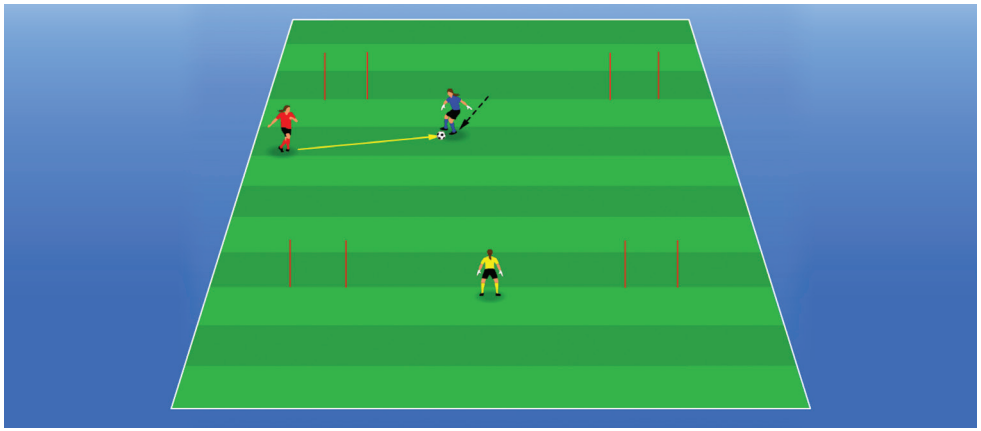

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Suggested equipment list:
- 8 portable poles, 1 or 2 balls (+ GK coach/assistant coach)

Grid size:
- Create gates using portable poles that are 2 metres wide (guide only)

Explanation:
- Position 2 goalkeepers as shown
- Game starts when coach passes to the blue goalkeeper
- As the ball is passed to the blue goalkeeper, the yellow goalkeeper moves behind one of his/her passing gates
- Blue goalkeeper controls the ball, identifies the yellow goalkeeper and looks to pass through the gate to the goalkeeper
- Yellow goalkeeper controls the ball then passes back to the coach to restart practice

Scoring system for attacking goalkeeper:
- 1 point for quality serve into the occupied passing gate

Scoring system for defending goalkeeper:
- 1 point for quality control and pass back to the coach

Rotation/Variation: ***C.H.A.N.G.E.I.T. (refer to page 56)***
- Swap roles after each action

Key Coaching Questions:
- **Pre-action:** Can you face your target and keep your head up to see your opponent?
- **Action:** Are you able to position your body square to the target?
- **Post-action:** Can you transfer your weight forward?

Key Coaching Words:
- **Face Forward -** encourage players to face the target
- **Scan -** encourage players to keep head up with vision on opponent
- **Follow through -** encourage players to transfer weight forward in follow-through

KEY COACHING WORDS

ATTACKING

Key Coaching Word	Core Skill	Meaning
Available	First Touch	Encourage players to move towards the ball
Scan	First Touch, Striking the ball, 1v1	Encourage players to keep head up with vision on opponent
Away	First Touch	Encourage players to control the ball away from defender's reach
Face Forward	Striking the ball	Encourage players to face forward to see the ball and goal/target
Follow through	Striking the ball	Encourage players to transfer weight forward in follow-through
Big	Running with the ball	Encourage players to take heavier touches into open space
Sprint	Running with the ball	Encourage players to sprint to the ball and push again
Glue	1v1	Encourage keeping the ball close to feet
Positive	1v1	Encourage players to use feints, change speed and direction

KEY COACHING WORDS

DEFENDING

Key Coaching Word	Core Skill/Goalkeeping	Meaning
Press	First Touch, Striking the ball, Running with the ball	Encourage defender to apply immediate pressure on ball carrier
Challenge	First Touch, Running with the ball	Encourage a challenge for the ball when a heavy touch is taken
Fast-break	First Touch, Striking the ball, Running with the ball	Encourage counter-attack with speed
Cover	Striking the ball	Encourage second defender to cover space behind the first defender
Block	Striking the ball	Encourage defenders to block line to target
Surfboard/Skateboard	1v1	Encourage standing 'side-on' to block direct line to goal
Adjust	Goalkeeping	Encourage goalkeeper to adjust to the position and movement of the ball
Set	Goalkeeping	Encourage goalkeeper to be set and still as shot is taken
Soft Hands	Goalkeeping	Encourage goalkeeper to be relaxed as they catch the ball
Stay Big	Goalkeeping	Encourage goalkeeper to stay big and not commit too early
Lead with the hands	Goalkeeping	Encourage goalkeeper to lead with their hands towards the ball

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Campbell, Ryan	Emerging Jets Skill Acquisition
Carle, Nick	SD Raiders Football Club Technical Director
Cooper, Michael	Newcastle Jets Technical Director
Edwards, Michael	Football Federation Tasmania Technical Director
Egger, Sharon	Manly United Football Club Technical Director, Women's Football
Ferguson, Edward	Northern Suburbs Community Football Manager
Gonzales, Oscar	Coach Education Manager, Football NSW
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Special thanks also to all the Football Federation Australia staff, across numerous departments, for their valuable contribution in writing, editing and producing the contents of this manual. Pictures throughout this manual taken by Ann Odong.

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