

Fun Soccer Games for 5 to 8 Year Olds



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Foreword

Dear Coach,

Welcome to my book of fun games for younger children. This is long overdue from me and I thank the publishers for nagging me into finally getting some of these games down on paper for all to share.

Many years ago a coaching friend of mine Pat Hilton and I shared an ambition to produce a book such as this. But Pat went off with many of his great ideas to the USA, his life took a different path and we sadly lost touch. But the idea always stayed with me, so I am happy to finally bring these ideas to you.

Ideas - by the way - are exactly what they are. I have made every effort to be original and design some completely new games with new rules and concepts, as well as some interesting titles. Please feel free to use them as they are shown or add your own imagination and progressions to the design.

This book, and the games within, is based on the concept that the majority of players in this age group dislike doing technical drills. For instance, if you say "We are going to do some passing drills today", the first question asked in return is usually "When are we going to play a match?"

Children see drills as a boring task and definitely not fun. This has been recognised by the English Football Association with the introduction of the new Youth Modules, which I highly recommend. Hopefully this book can act as a complement to the first levels.

The trick with the younger ones is to get them to relate to things they link to fun and excitement such as games, TV shows, and movies.

The games are not about us barking out orders but encouraging effort, flair, teamwork, sportsmanship and, most of all, FUN.

I have laid out the organisation and instructions of each game for you to quickly and easily understand the rules and objectives. Beyond this, it is your task to mark out the area, sort out the equipment and explain the rules, and get the children playing as quickly as you can. Of course, we must not neglect the warm-up and have drinks available in order to keep the players adequately hydrated.

I have been privileged to work with some great coaches and would like to thank Pat Hilton (wherever you are), Ted Dale and all the troops at the David Beckham Academy, every player, and student coach I have worked with, the Surrey County FA and - most importantly of all - my soccer-friendly wife, Pauline. I hope you enjoy the book.

Yours in soccer,



Keith

My 25 Top Tips for Coaching 5 to 8 Year Olds

1. Be prepared for when they arrive. Have the first game ready to go.
2. Be welcoming, enthusiastic, and remember to smile.
3. Keep explanations simple, let them ask questions.
4. Be inclusive, involve all players.
5. Always encourage and praise.
6. Use a whistle or fun sound like a hooter to gain their attention. Avoid shouting and losing patience.
7. Use visual aids/colours to enhance their observation.
8. Avoid highlighting errors or weaknesses, and do not use negative words.
9. Use your player's names. If a player has a nickname that is fine, but don't make one up, it could upset them.
10. Make sure they know your name or they call you coach, not Sir or Miss.
11. Use the correct size footballs. Size 3 for this age group.
12. Mix teams around so players don't dominate.
13. Encourage natural leaders to be good role models for the team.
14. Stay calm and patient with bad behaviour. Sit poorly behaved players out in a sin bin if need be, but ensure they are supervised.
15. Involve them in problem solving. Ask questions and let them discuss amongst themselves, just guide them in right direction.
16. Have a contingency plan if the practice is not working or they find it too easy or too hard.
17. Politely ask parents and guardians to remain unobtrusive as children need to focus on you and the game.
18. Don't be tempted to join in. This affects your control and is dangerous.
19. Ensure fair play. Don't overlook breaches of rules.
20. Encourage flair and risk taking, they must not be scared to make a mistake.
21. Keep heading sessions to no longer than 20 to 30 minutes max and check inflation on balls (not too hard/soft).
22. Use hand ball games to introduce co-ordination and passing and movement.
23. Remember, they watch your body language so stay bubbly. Avoid habits like folding your arms, constantly looking at your watch, getting distracted by a keen parent or looking fed up.
24. Keep them busy. Minimum stoppages, except for drinks, and you can use this time for any questions.
25. Use and encourage humour but take care to avoid overuse of jargon. Remember, what adults see as funny, children may not.

All of the above are in addition to the normal health and safety issues like registers, medical information, field and equipment checks, and the correct playing kit etc.

It is vital that you have an assistant or other adult with you when coaching minors.

How to Use This Book

Contents

The games have been graded by difficulty and age appropriateness. The majority of games have been illustrated using 12 players, but in the contents you can find a suggested range of numbers within which the game works well.

Odd numbers are an inevitability of coaching kid's soccer. Many of the games in this book easily cater for odd numbers but others may require uneven sides to accommodate an odd number of players.

Set Up

The size of the playing area is by no means an absolute and can be varied if you have more or less players. The playing area can also be adjusted according to the ability of your players, whether this requires a smaller or larger area depends on the game.

In order to mark out the area, as a general rule 10 yards is equal to 7 strides. You can use this simple equivalent to mark out the area you need; 20 yards = 14 strides, 30 yards = 21 strides etc.

Equipment

The majority of games in this book require little more than some footballs, cones and bibs. Some of the games require goals, these can be made using cones or poles if actual goals are not available where you train or you do not have portable goals.

The Rules

Easy to read and easy to understand. Everything you need to know to run the game successfully once you have set it up.

Main Objectives

A quick overview of the skills and techniques promoted in the game.

What To Call Out

Never be lost for words with these concise and constructive phrases. Remember, this is "what to call out" not "what to shout", you should deliver these games in a way that your players respond to. Always focus on the positives.

Progression

Are your players finding the game too easy or too difficult? Look to this section for advice on how to tweak the rules to take the game forward.

Hint

Quick bits of advice that can help the game run more smoothly.

Game Finder

Page	Game	Players	Age Range	Difficulty*
1	Ghostbusters	8 to 20	5 - 8 yrs	1
2	Pirates of the Caribbean	8 to 20	5 - 8 yrs	1
3	Tiger Tails	8 to 20	5 - 8 yrs	1
4	King of the Ring	8 to 16	5 - 8 yrs	1
5	Robocops	10 to 14	5 - 8 yrs	1
6	Chain Gang	10 to 16	5 - 8 yrs	1
7	Funny Turns	5 to 12	5 - 8 yrs	1
8	Cat and Mouse	10 to 14	5 - 8 yrs	1
9	Space Wars	8 to 20	5 - 8 yrs	2
10	Star Gates	8 to 12	5 - 8 yrs	2
11	Aliens	8 to 20	5 - 8 yrs	2
12	Zombie Attack	11 to 20	5 - 8 yrs	2
13	Twins	12 to 20	5 - 8 yrs	2
14	Space Invaders	12 to 16	6 - 8 yrs	2
15	Airball	8 to 16	6 - 8 yrs	2
16	Head for Home	11 to 14	6 - 8 yrs	2
17	Dive Bombers	4 to 20	6 - 8 yrs	2
18	Behind Enemy Lines	6 to 12	6 - 8 yrs	2
19	Under Arrest	11 to 14	5 - 8 yrs	3
20	Bumper Cars	13 to 15	5 - 8 yrs	3
21	Tomb Raiders	10 to 14	5 - 8 yrs	3
22	Over the Border	8 to 16	6 - 8 yrs	3
23	Don't Feed the Monkeys	11 to 14	6 - 8 yrs	3
24	Bodyguards	9 to 12	6 - 8 yrs	3
25	Pool Table	10 to 12	6 - 8 yrs	3

*The games have been given a relative difficulty. All are easy to run but some are more challenging for players than others.

The Rules

Inside the area 10 players have a ball while the two remaining players are the evil ghosts.

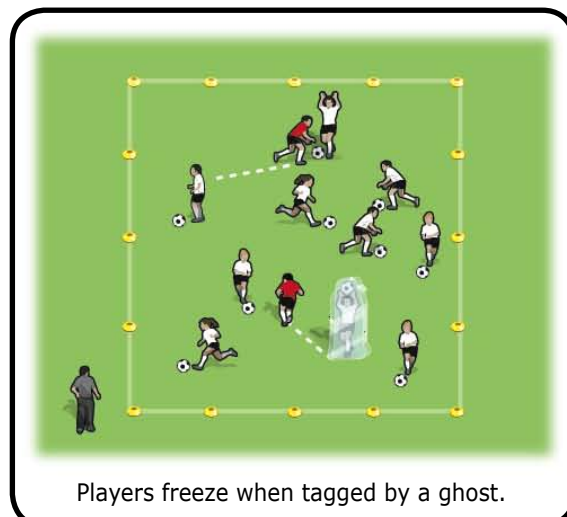
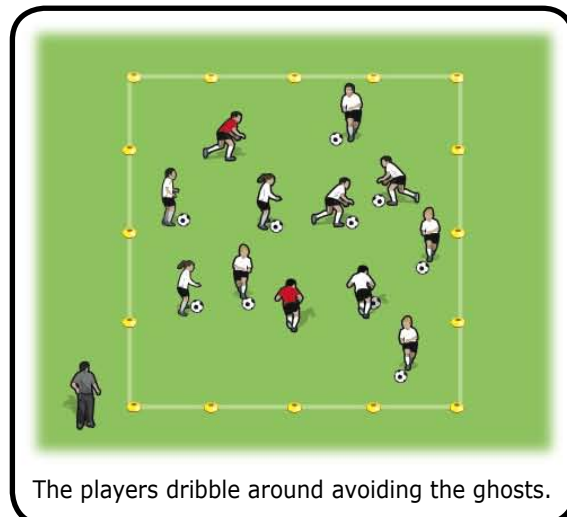
The players must dribble their ball around the area – they can move in any direction as long as they stay within the area – trying to stay away from the ghosts.

The ghosts attempt to tag the dribbling players. Once a player has been tagged they freeze and stand with their feet apart holding their ball above their head.

See how many players the ghosts can freeze in 1 minute. The quickest time to tag all players, or the most tagged when the time runs out, wins.

After each game nominate two new ghosts and restart with all players back in the game.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Dribbling, close control, turning away from defenders.

Set Up

Area: 30x30 yard square
Players: 12
Equipment: 10 balls

What To Call Out

"Head up"
"Accelerate"
"Freeze if you've been tagged"

Progression

Allow free players to unfreeze tagged players with a nutmeg – playing the ball between their legs – which means the ghosts have to work harder to tag everyone. In order to be unfrozen players must shout out "I need a ghostbuster".

Make it even harder by getting players to crawl through a frozen players legs after they have played the nutmeg

Hint

Times and results should be told to players as you go as an incentive to be the quickest, most evil ghosts.

The Rules

As captain of the ship, begin by telling your crew of pirates the names for each of the sides; Bow (front), Stern (back), Port side (left), and Starboard side (right). This acts as a little bit of education and a memory test.

The pirates dribble around on deck and when the captain calls out one of the four names the pirates must dribble to that end or side.

The last pirate to reach the side called has a small forfeit to undertake but nothing too nasty (5 or 10 star jumps for example).

Main Objectives

Basic ball control, ball familiarity, changing direction.

Set Up

Area: 50x40 yard area, shaped like a ship
 Players: 12
 Equipment: 12 balls

What To Call Out

"Head up"
 "Keep your ball close"
 "Port", "Starboard", "Bow", "Stern"

Progression

Introduce some other skills to be completed on the captain's call.

"Scrub the deck" – control the ball using the inside of your feet, either static or moving.

"Climb the rigging" – do toe taps up and down on the ball as quickly as you can.

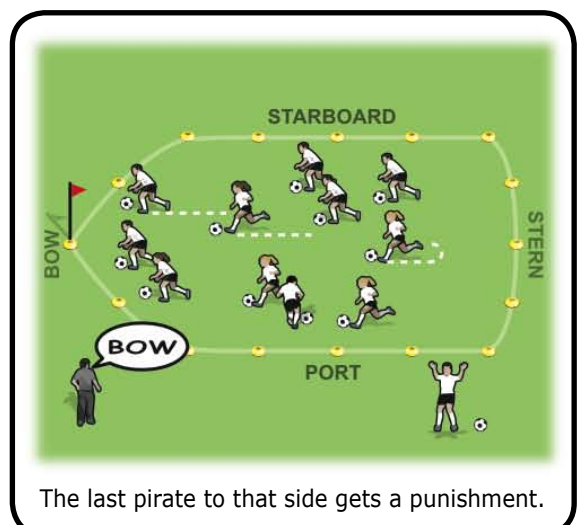
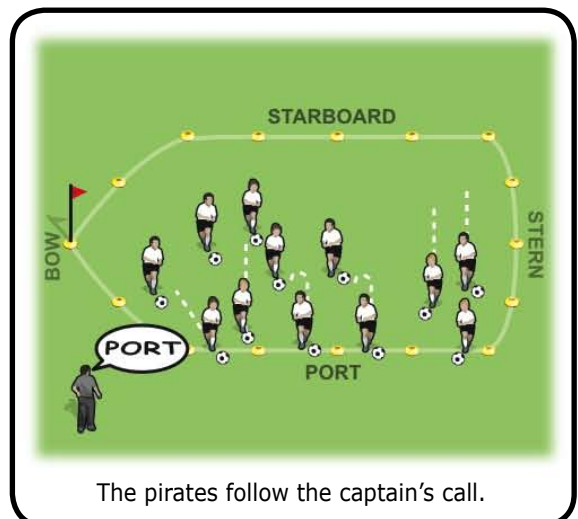
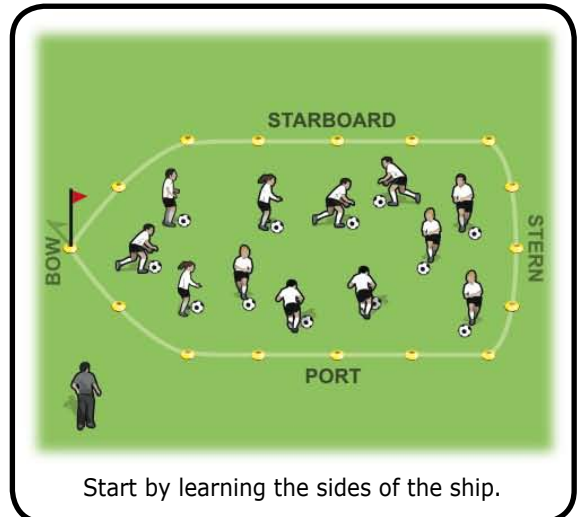
"Clear the decks" – try to flick the ball up and juggle it off of the deck as long as you can.

"Captain on board" – try to balance on the ball and salute the captain.

"Cannonball!" – hit the deck and lie down as quickly as possible to avoid the blast.

Hint

Place a corner flag at the front of the ship to help with memorizing the sides and let the kids name their ship.



The Rules

Each tiger has a tail tucked into the back of their shorts. The tail must be visible so that other tigers can steal it.

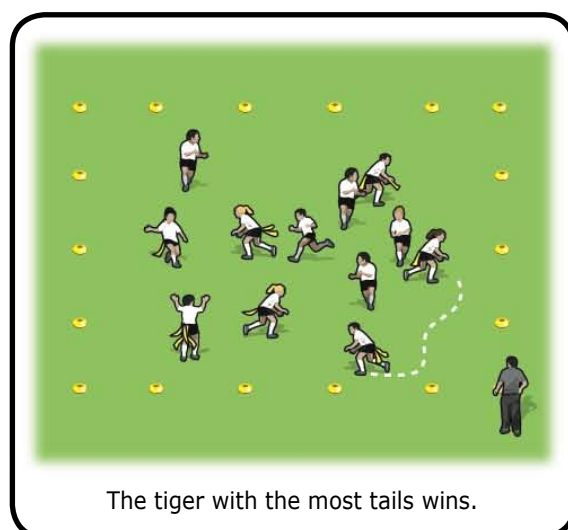
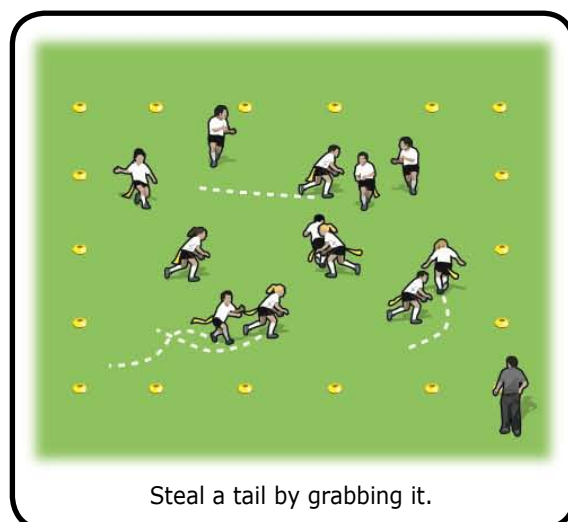
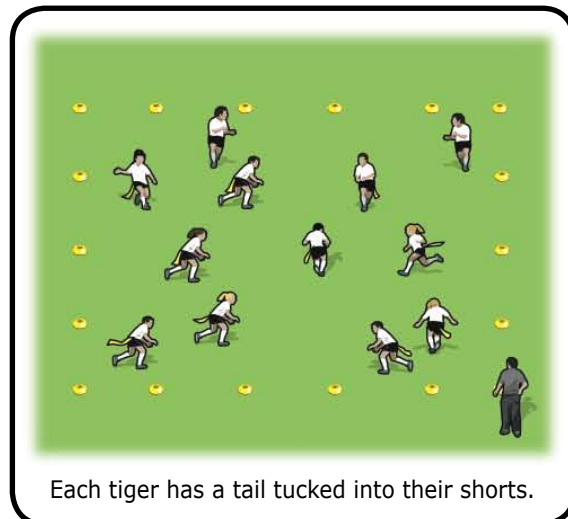
The tigers run around inside the area and trying to steal each other's tails by pulling the tail out of another tiger's shorts.

When a tiger steals a tail they add it to their own. Other tigers can now steal however many tails they have.

If a tail drops on the floor any tiger can steal it. However, first to touch the tail gets it to avoid a tug-of-war.

Tigers cannot grip their tail to stop it being stolen. They need to protect their tail by sprinting away, turning and screening.

The game can be played to a time limit (2 minutes, say) and see which tiger has the most tails at the end.



Main Objectives

Awareness, reactions, change of direction, explosive speed, twisting, turning, screening.

Set Up

Area: 45x30 yards
Players: 12
Equipment: 12 tails (old bibs or strips of material)

What To Call Out

"Turn"
"Sprint"
"Look out"

Progression

Give each player a ball which they must keep under close control whilst trying to steal tails.

When a tiger has their tail stolen they must now dribble around the outside of the area and the game is played until there is a winning tiger with all of the tails. It might be more realistic to play to the last two as the 1v1 at the end could last a long time.

Hint

You can make your own tails from material or use old bibs. Avoid using new bibs as they might get ripped.

The Rules

The fighters begin by dribbling around inside the ring in any direction.

Keeping their own ball under close control they must try to knock another fighter's ball out of the ring.

To be successful fighters must decide who to attack and use defensive skills to knock their ball out, while being aware that they might be attacked from a different angle.

Once a fighter's ball has been knocked out they are out of the fight and must not touch another fighter's ball.

Any fighter who has been knocked out should collect their ball and walk around the outside of the ring with it so you can clearly see who is in and who is out.

When down to the final 2 or 3 fighters introduce a time limit to encourage them to win.

If there is no winner before the time is up everyone can rejoin and start again.

Main Objectives

Close control, turning, tackling, defending, decision making.

Set Up

Area: 30x30 yard square

Players: 12

Equipment: 12 balls

What To Call Out

"Let battle commence" "Keep your ball close" "Head up"

Progression

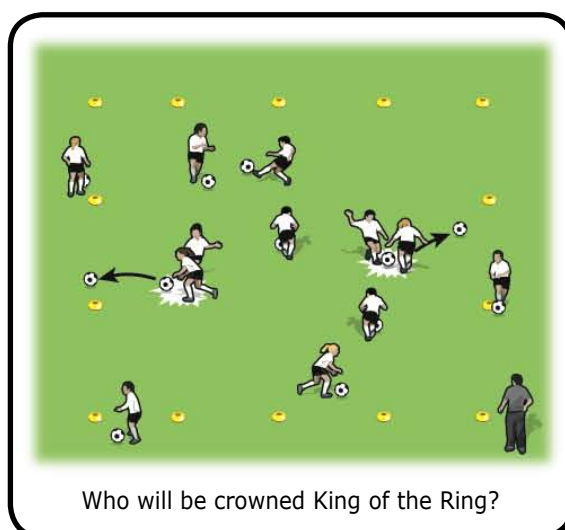
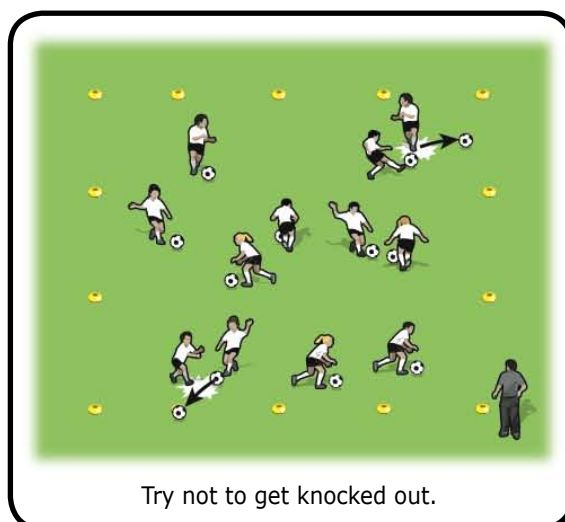
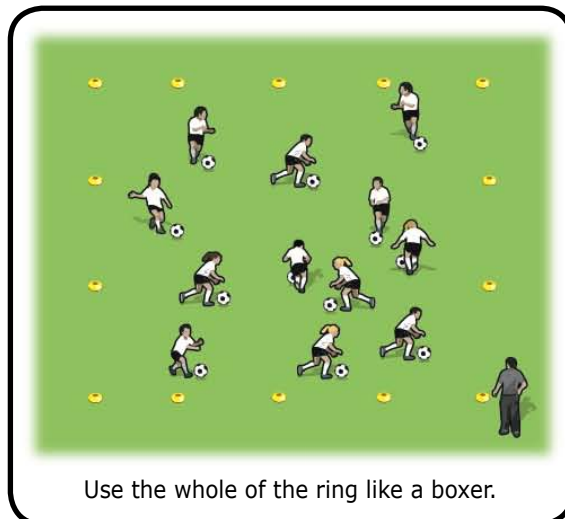
Encourage tactics. For example, fighters might pair up early on, placing their balls in the corner and go on the attack to knock out other fighters.

The game could be played as a tag team game with one half of the pair starting inside the ring and able to tag out if they are tired or under pressure.

Hint

Make sure that fighters stay on their feet and do not slide tackle at this young age. If any fighter slides they are out on a technical knockout.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



The Rules

One player stands in each target zone to act as a target for the attacking team. They also serve the ball for the other team to counter attack.

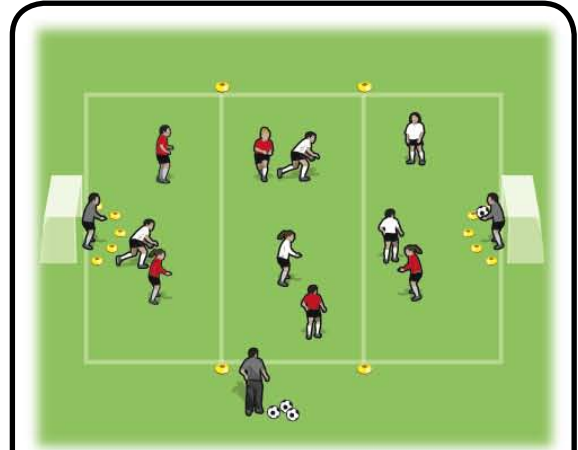
The ball is thrown and caught between team mates to reach the target player.

Players can move with the ball but only walking speed – like Robocop. They can pass freely and must pass if tagged by an opponent.

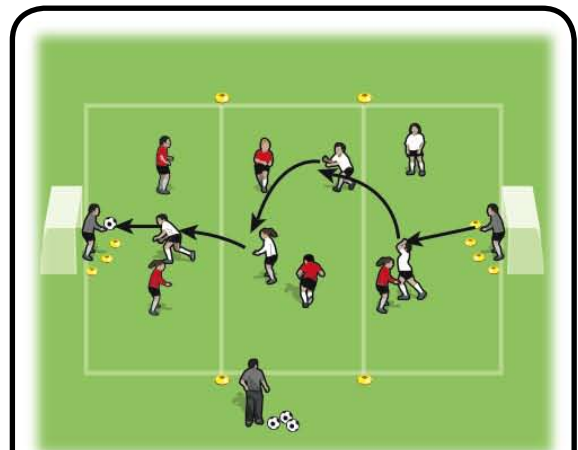
Opponents can only win the ball from an intercepted throw or if the ball is dropped.

Speed walking is allowed.

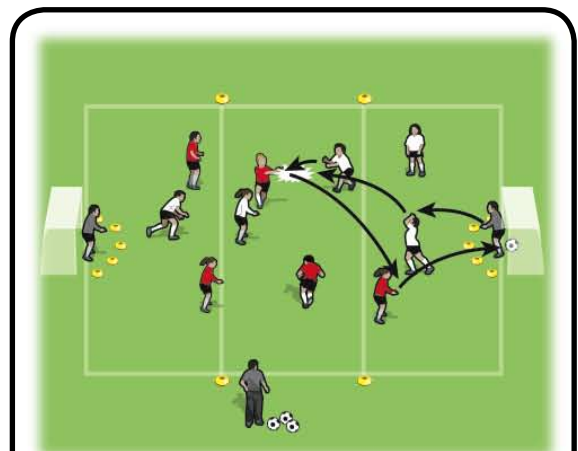
A point can either be scored by reaching the target player from a designated third of the pitch or after a minimum number of passes to encourage team play.



The game begins with one of the target players.



Players pass the ball by throwing it between them.



Steal the ball by intercepting a throw.

Main Objectives

Basic handling, co-ordination, understanding of distances and angles, throwing and catching, calling for the ball.

Set Up

Area: 50x30 yards with target zones at each goal
 Players: 12 2 teams of 6
 Equipment: Cones, 2 goals, 1 ball

What To Call Out

"Tagged, you can't move"

"Catch the ball high, with both hands"

"Target player must stay in the zone"

Progression

Allow the ball to be headed rather than caught if this will gain an advantage.

Allow the attacking team to throw or head the ball into the goal. The target player now becomes a goalkeeper and is released from the no-running rule. The goalkeeper cannot leave the target zone though.

Hint

Be firm on the no running rule. Players need to take time to be accurate with their throws. Any form of throwing is allowed, over-arm, under-arm or proper throw-in technique.

The Rules

Place a large cone or pole at one end of each channel. The players are divided into two teams and start at the opposite end.

The first player dribbles a ball up the channel, around the cone, and back to their team mates.

The starting player then links arms with the second player on their team and they dribble the ball up the channel, around the cone, and back to their team mates.

Each time an extra player joins the chain gang until all the players are in the chain.

The whole team must negotiate the course and the turn without breaking and keeping their ball under control.

If at any time the chain breaks they must start again from the line without adding an extra link.

Main Objectives

Teamwork, strength, balance.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards divided into two 40x15 yard channels
 Players: 12, 2 teams of 6
 Equipment: Cones, 2 balls

What To Call Out

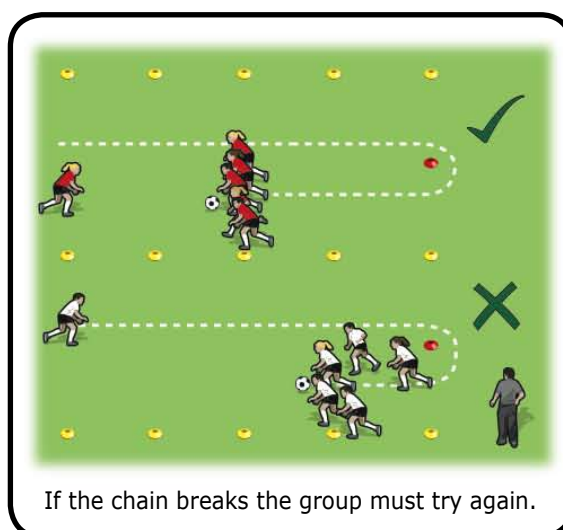
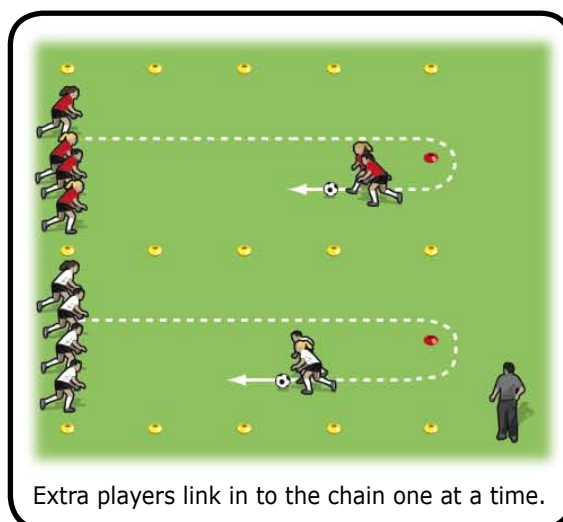
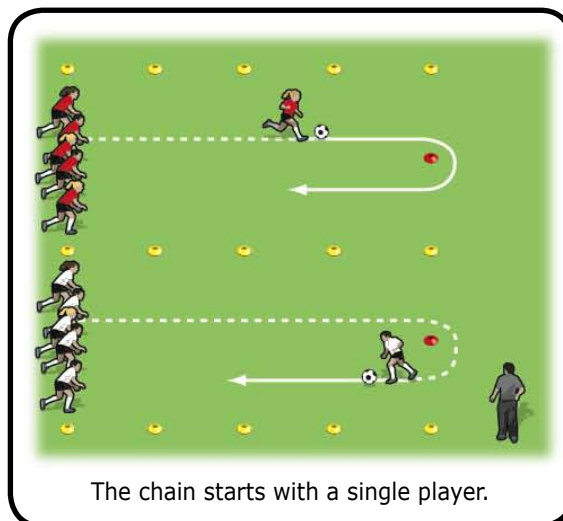
"Keep the ball close"
 "Don't break the chain"
 "Work together"

Progression

All players have to dribble a ball with them when they join the chain.

Hint

Play best of three or five races and change the starting player as they must work harder.



The Rules

The players start in the diamond with a ball each.

Nominate a player to audition their funny turn. This can be any way they know of turning with the ball, however unorthodox.

The player called dribbles to one of the outside cones and shows a turn that all the others must watch.

If you are happy with the turn then the player dribbles back and all of the players get 1 minute to practice the turn they have just watched.

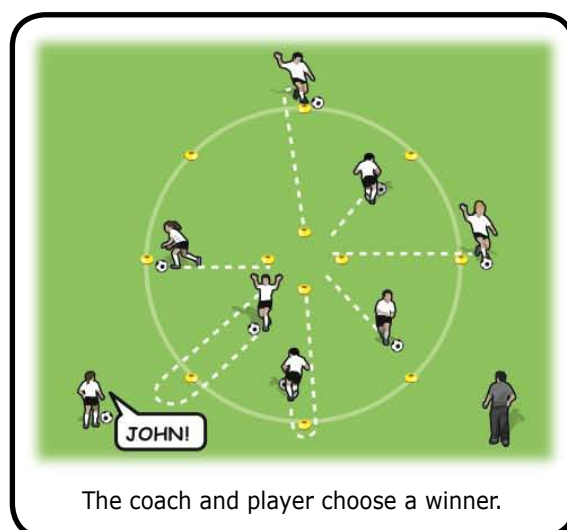
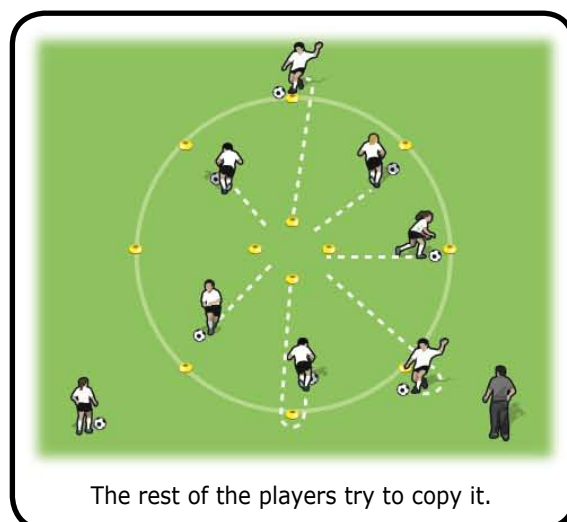
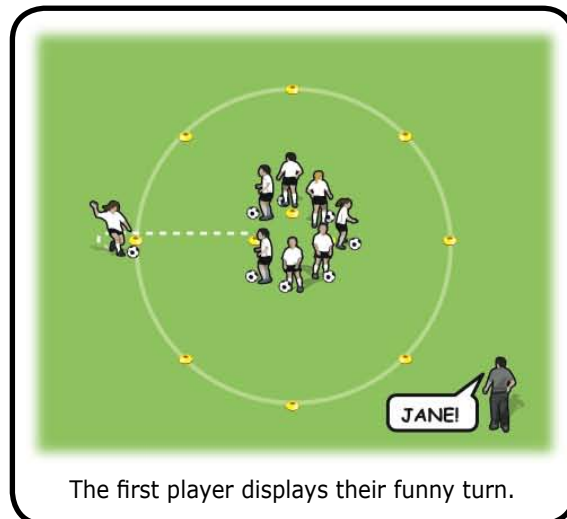
After the rehearsal the players have to work their way around the clock performing the turn and returning through the diamond at each cone.

The coach and the player that auditioned the turn now become judges and choose the best attempt at the turn as the winner. 2nd and 3rd places can also be awarded.

The winner is allowed to nominate the next audition and can choose themselves if they wish.

Make sure everyone has a chance to audition a turn.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Turning with the ball under close control.

Set Up

Area: Circle, 10 yards radius
 Players: 8
 Equipment: 12 cones, 8 balls

What To Call Out

"It's showtime!"
 "Be inventive"
 "Keep the ball close"

Progression

Add 1 or 2 defenders inside the circle which the players must avoid while dribbling. The defenders cannot enter the diamond in the centre.

Hint

No matter how easy or hard the turn, give the players lots of praise and encourage them to try different things.

The Rules

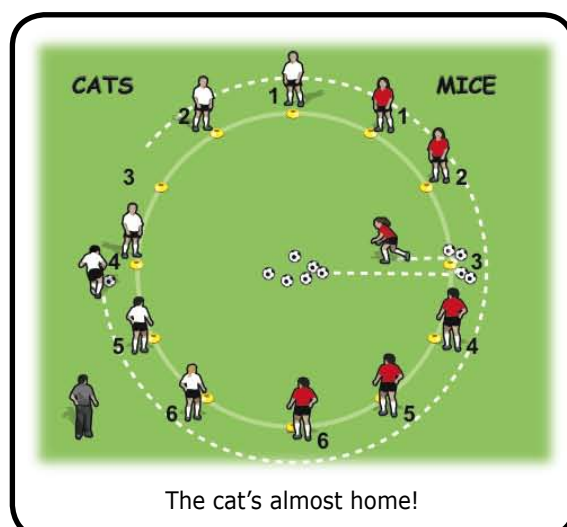
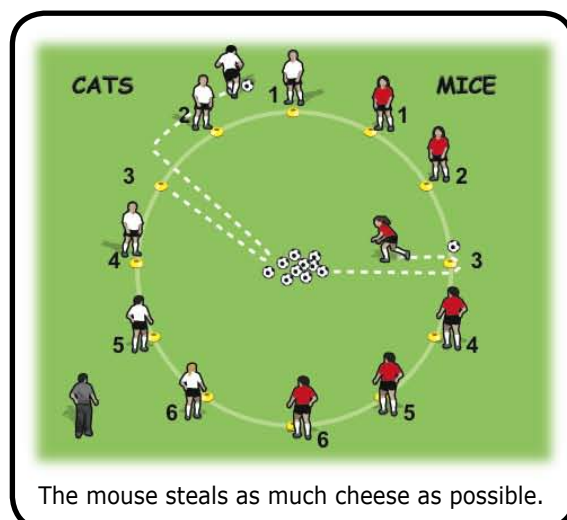
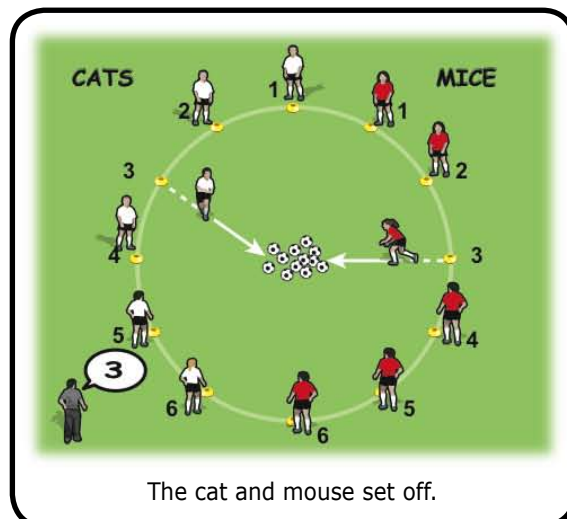
Players are divided into two teams, cats and mice, with the players on each team numbered 1-6 each starting at a cone. Start with 12 balls (pieces of cheese) in the middle.

The coach calls out a number and the appropriate mouse runs to the centre and steals the cheese, one piece at a time, taking it back to their starting place on the circle.

At the same time, the appropriate cat takes a piece of cheese, dribbles back to their starting cone and then all the way around the outside of the circle before returning the cheese to the middle.

When the cat gets back the turn is over. The mouse counts their cheese and returns it to the middle before the coach calls the next number to repeat the game.

After all 6 pairs have gone, count the total number of pieces of cheese stolen and switch the roles of cat and mouse.



Main Objectives

Speed, control, turning, dribbling.

Set Up

Area: Circle, 10 yard radius
 Players: 12, 2 teams of 6
 Equipment: 12 balls, 12 cones

What To Call Out

"Stop the cheese at your cone"
 "Keep the cheese close"
 "The cat's almost home"

Progression

Allow the cat to sprint around the outside of the circle without a ball to encourage quicker, short bursts and turns by the mice. This will cause the scores to be lower.

Hint

Once a player has taken their turn they should sit down to avoid confusion – unless the ground is wet of course!

The Rules

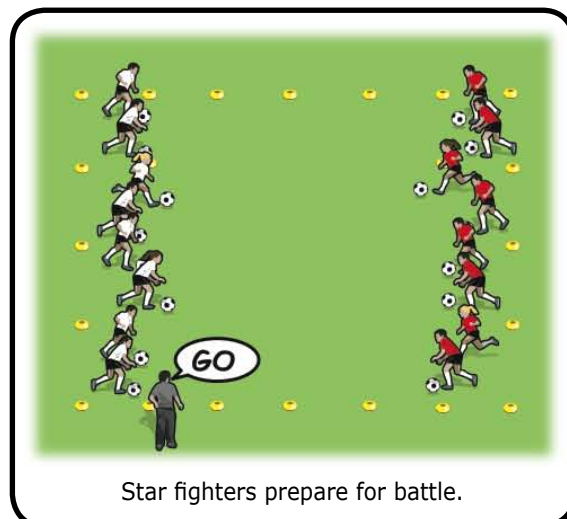
Two fleets of star fighters start either side of the grid on their launch pads.

The star fighters take off on the commander's order to battle the opposing fleet.

To score you must knock an opponent's ball out of the grid with your ball whilst ensuring that your ball stays inside the grid.

If your ball leaves the grid you have been shot down and should crash land outside of the grid.

At the end of the battle the fleet with the most remaining star fighters wins.



Main Objectives

Accuracy and weight of passing.

Set Up

Area: 30x30 yard square
 Players: 16, 2 teams of 8
 Equipment: Cones, ball each

What To Call Out

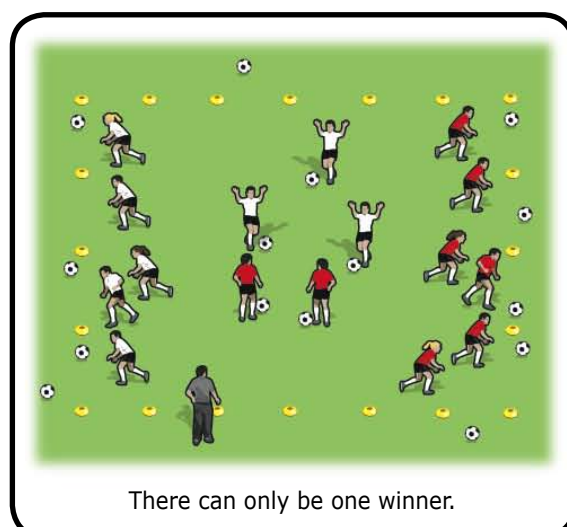
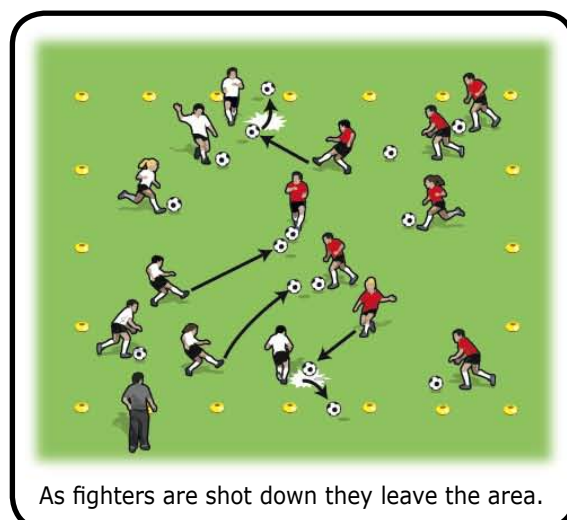
"Lock on to a target"
 "Try to not get shot down"
 "Keep your ball close"

Progression

For older children you might allow a hit to include striking your opponent below the knee rather than knocking their ball out of the grid. Not too hard though!

Hint

Keep spare balls at each end as if a player attempts a strike and misses the ball could go anywhere. Shot down players can then act as ammunition collectors to keep the team's supply stocked.



The Rules

The team in possession must play a set number of passes (say 5) then attempt to break into the next frontier through one of the star gates by passing or dribbling through.

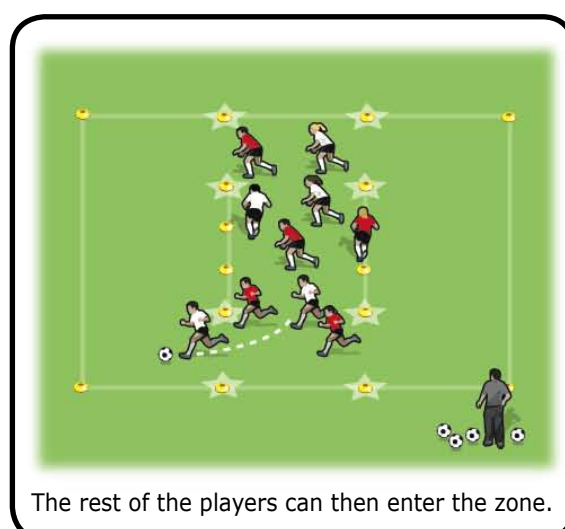
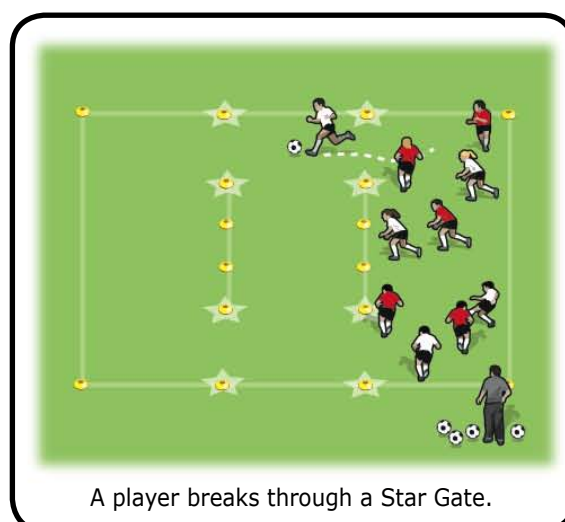
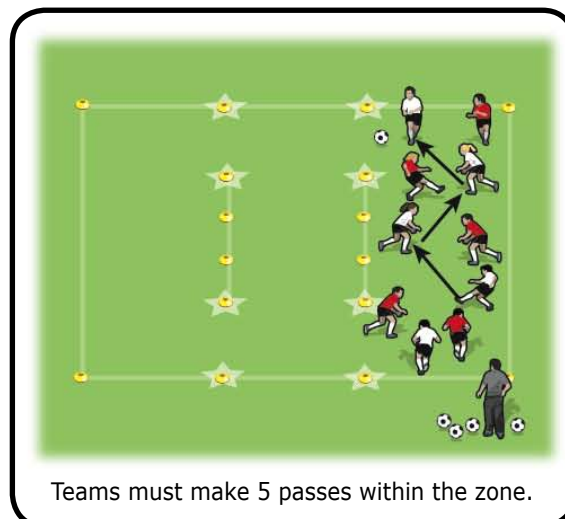
The defending players must not simply stand in front of the gate to block it.

Once the ball has been played through a gate - and the player who played it has followed it through - all of the players can move through into the next frontier and the process begins again.

Unless both ball and player have gone through, no-one else is allowed in as the next frontier is deemed to be unsafe.

The object of the game is to get from one end to the other and back again through any combination of gates.

If possession is lost the other team faces the same challenge. However, if the ball is lost in the central zone the other team must get into an end zone before the process can start again.



Main Objectives

Passing, dribbling, timing and angle of forward runs, switching play.

Set Up

Area: 45x30 yard area divided into 3, 15 yard zones
 Players: 10, 2 teams of 5
 Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Stargate open" - the passing target has been met.
 "All clear" - all players can move through a gate.
 "Try and switch to another gate"

Progression

The ball can be passed through a gate into space but players are not allowed into space before the ball as it is unsafe. This acts as an early introduction to the offside rule, timing runs, and passing into space.

Hint

Keep a supply of footballs nearby to keep the practice flowing.

The Rules

Nominate one player to start as an alien. The rest of the players become the space cadets.

The alien collects a ball from the side of the area and must play the ball against any of the space cadets below knee height in order to bite them.

The space cadets must run around the area – in any direction - trying to avoid being bitten by the alien.

If a player is bitten they collect a ball from the side of the pitch and they too become an alien.

The space cadets cannot be attacked when they are in one of the safety pods. However, a player can only stay in a pod for a maximum of 10 seconds and cannot return to the same pod without first visiting another.

Main Objectives

Speed, agility, change of direction, reactions off the ball, timing, accuracy and pace of pass.

Set Up

Area: 40x40 yard square with triangular 5 yard safety pods in each corner

Players: 12

Equipment: 11 balls

What To Call Out

"Head up"

"Sprint"

"Aliens, think about when to bite"

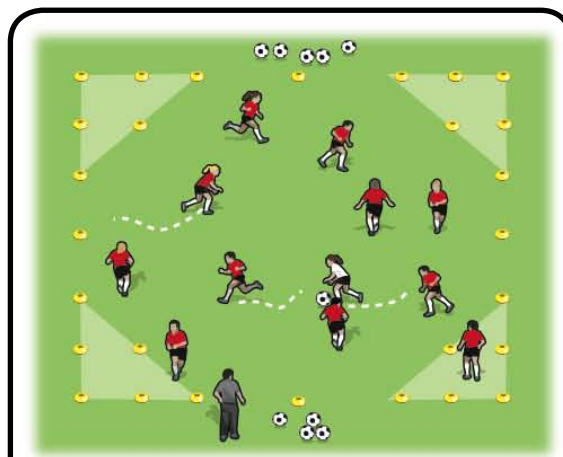
Progression

Reduce the amount of time that players can spend in each of the safety pods.

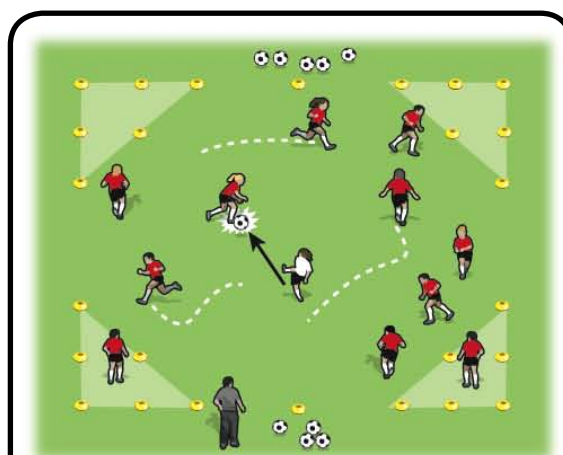
Limit the number of players allowed in each safety pod. If a pod has reached capacity when the next player enters one of the players already in the pod must leave in order to make space for them.

Hint

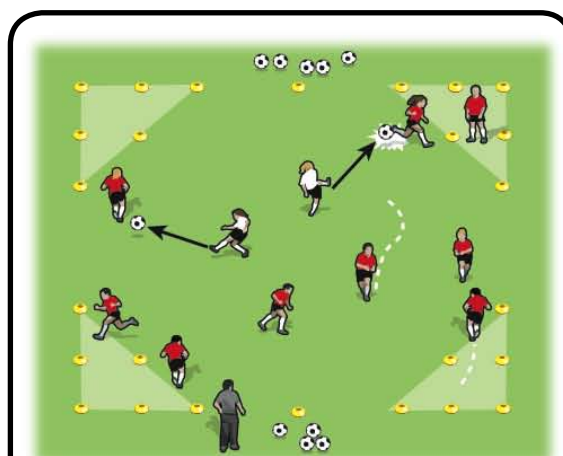
Aliens must consider when to bite as if they lose their ball they must go and collect another, wasting biting time. If they lose all of the balls valuable time and energy will be spent collecting them.



The alien hunts its prey.



The alien gets a bite.



It's hard to escape as the aliens multiply.

The Rules

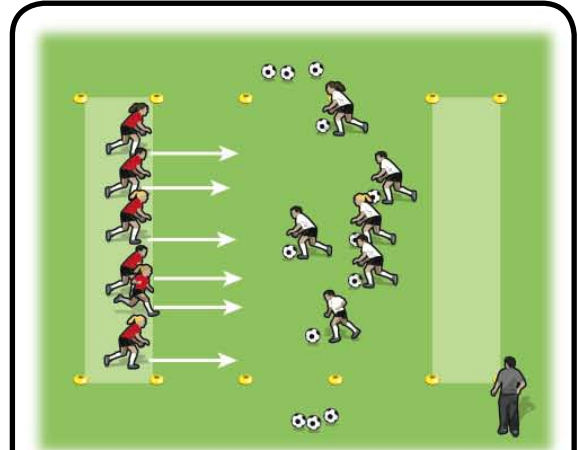
Split the players into two teams. One team starts in the middle and one team goes to an end zone.

The team in the middle are the zombies and in order to bite a player they have to keep their ball close and within touching distance when they tag a runner with their hand.

The players without a ball have to go from end zone to end zone without being bitten by the zombies.

Once a runner is bitten they turn into a zombie and get a ball from the side of the area.

See who can be the last runner to get bitten.



The zombies are the team starting in the middle.

Main Objectives

Dribbling at pace, change of direction, disguise, attacking space.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards with 5 yard end zones
 Players: 12, 2 teams of 6
 Equipment: 11 balls

What To Call Out

"Zombies!" – to get the game started
 "You've been bitten"
 "Stay inside the grid"

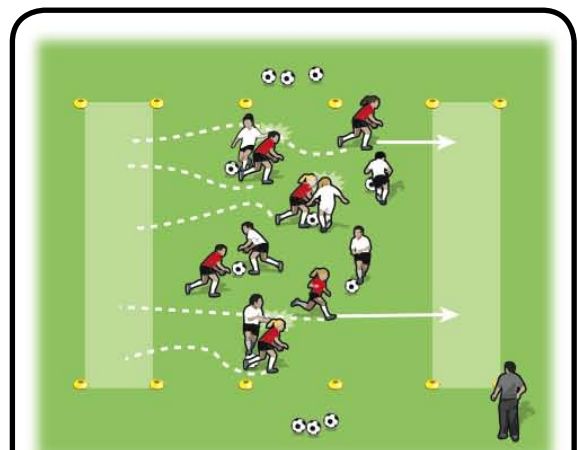
Progression

Fewer zombies than runners will make it harder at the start.

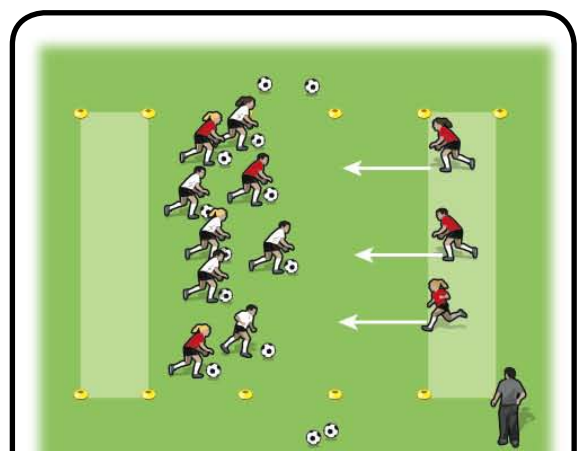
You can also use smaller balls to increase skill levels or add specific gates that runners must escape through.

Hint

Have fun, don't get bitten.



Can you get to the other side without being bitten?



If a player is bitten they become a zombie too.

The Rules

Players must find a twin and play together by tying their legs together with a piece of cloth or an old bib – think three-legged race.

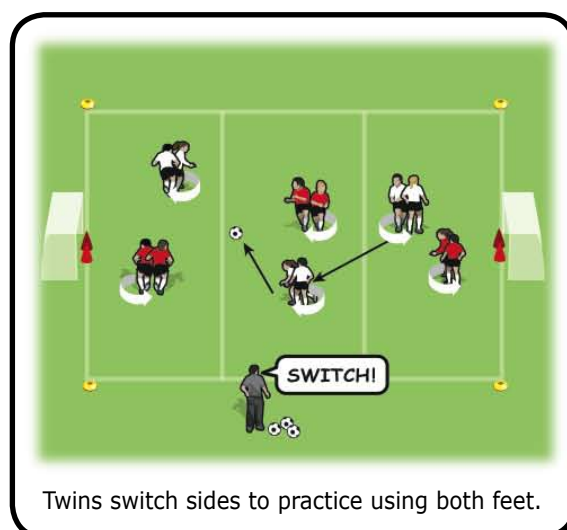
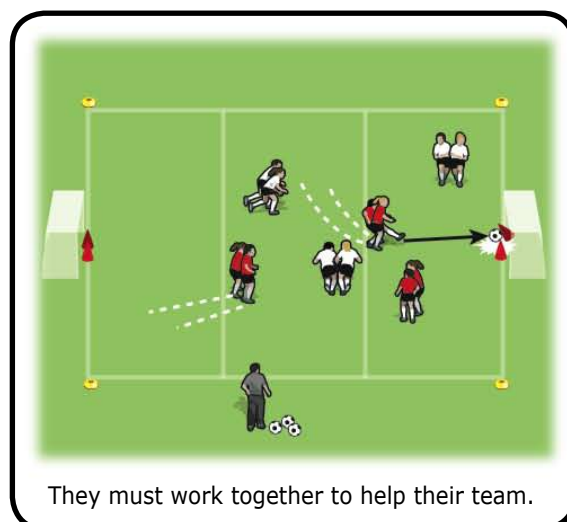
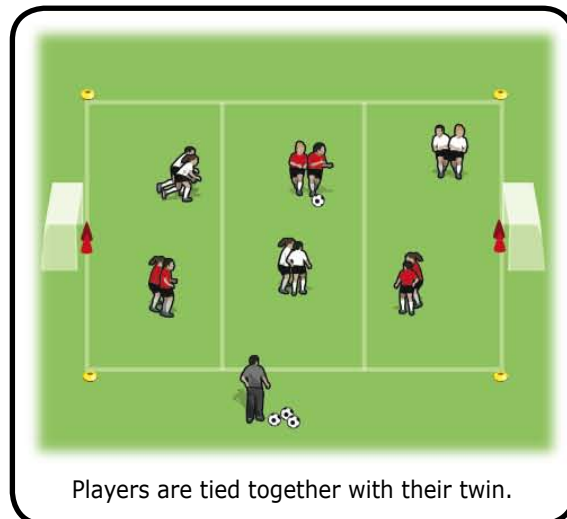
Divide the players into two teams. They are aiming to hit the cones on the goal line in order to score a point.

Players must stay linked throughout the game and can only pass or shoot, tackle or intercept with their outside leg.

Players must switch sides on the coach's command so that they practice using both their left and right feet. Anyone can take possession of the ball once they have switched and tied their legs together again.

The ball must remain below head height to encourage the use of the weaker foot.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Working with others, problem solving, coordination, weaker foot accuracy.

Set Up

Area: 30x25 yards
Players: 12, 2 teams of 6
Equipment: 4 cones, 2 goals, 1 ball

What To Call Out

"Stay linked"
"Move together"
"Outside foot only"

Progression

Remove the cones and allow longer shots and chipped goals into the entire goal.

Instruct players that when you shout "break" they must untie themselves and can play as normal. This will allow you to see how they react in relation to the position of the ball.

Hint

This game is perfect for large numbers as it automatically ties them up. You can play with anywhere between 8 and 20 players. Goalkeepers can be added if available.

The Rules

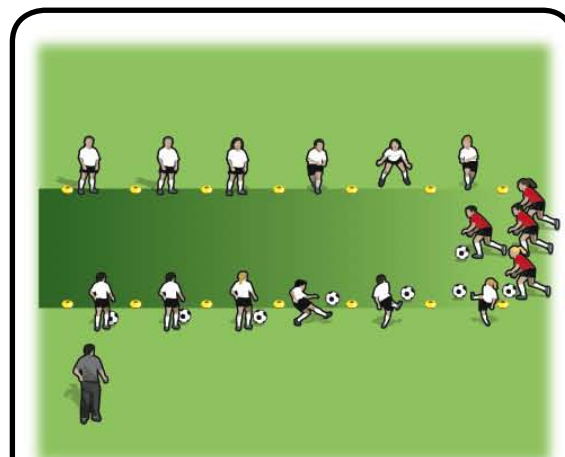
In pairs, players from 3 of the teams stand on either side of the channel and on the coach's call play one touch passing back and forth. This represents the laser to shoot down invaders.

One of the teams - the invaders - has to dribble through the channel, one player per zone at a time avoiding having their ball hit by the lasers.

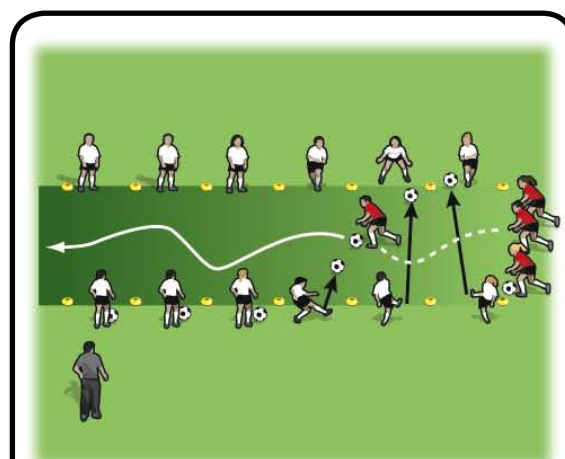
If an invader's ball is hit by a laser, they have been destroyed and leave the channel in that zone.

The invaders must aim to reach the safety zone at the end of the channel. The team with the most invaders reaching the safety zone wins.

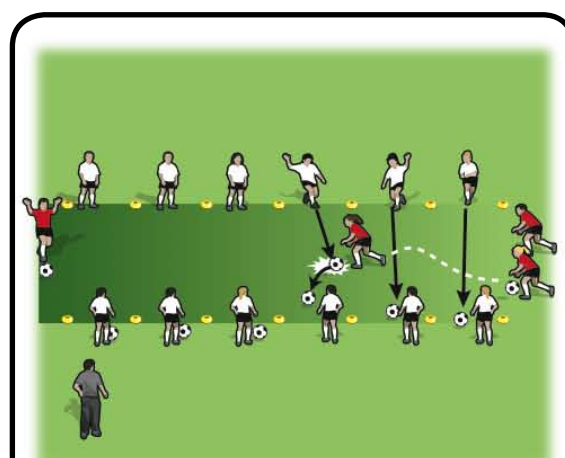
If neither team reaches the safety zone, the team that progress the farthest along the channel wins.



Lasers are fired back and forth across the channel.



Dodge the lasers to reach the safety zone.



If your ball is hit by a laser, you are shot down.

Main Objectives

Dribbling and close control, passing accuracy and pace, one-touch passing.

Set Up

Area: 30x10 yard area with cones 5 yards apart along the length
 Players: 16, 4 teams of 4
 Equipment: 10 balls

What To Call Out

"Commence firing"
 "Passers must play one touch"
 "Don't hide your ball between your legs"

Progression

Introduce timing, so the quickest team to reach the safety zone wins or stipulate a maximum amount of time.

Alternatively, allow the passers an extra touch so that they can be more accurate when firing the laser.

Hint

Keep an eye out for cheating in this one, if an invader's ball is touched, they're out. Make sure the passers are only using one touch to begin with.

The Rules

This game must be played by teams of 4 or 5 as you need at least one spare grid in each half of the area.

Players look to throw the ball above head height into the spare grid in the opponent's half. It must hit the ground to score a point.

The opposition must prevent this by catching the ball. They can then try to throw into their opponent's spare grid.

Players must call to avoid having two players going for the same ball. If two players go for the same ball they incur a penalty point.

Play to 10 points, switching sides halfway through.

Serves alternate and points are scored on every serve no matter what.

If the ball goes out of bounds the team that touched the ball last loses the point.

Main Objectives

Goalkeeping skills.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards, in two halves. 6 10x10 yard grids in each half.
 Players: 10, 2 teams of 5
 Equipment: Cones, 1 ball

What To Call Out

"Launch the airball"
 "Call your name to catch the airball"
 "Put your name on it"

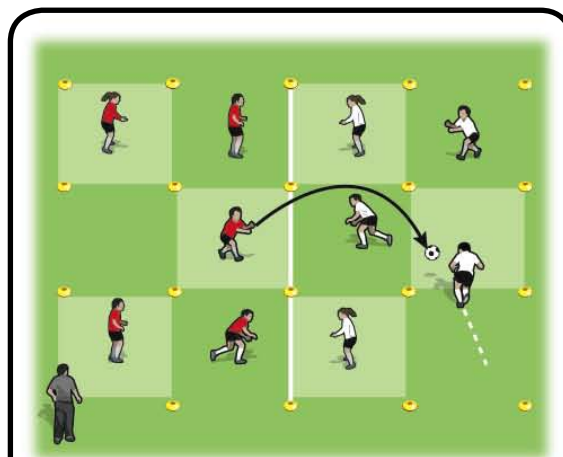
Progression

Allow players to throw the ball between them before throwing into the opposition's half.

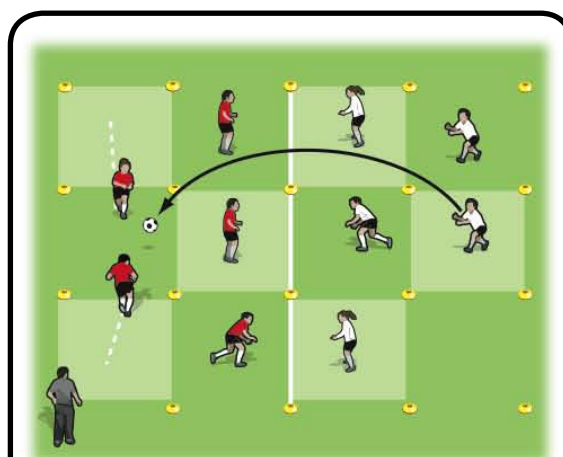
Allow players to punch the ball straight back using two fists.

Hint

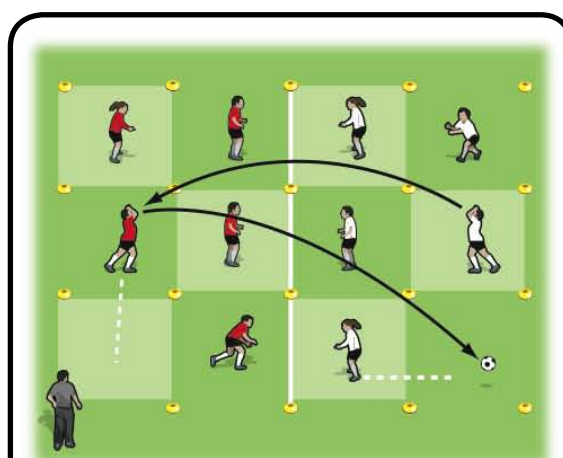
Encourage players to catch the ball as high as possible. This will enable them to return it quicker.



The ball must be thrown into the empty grid.



Two players move into the grid incurring a penalty.



The ball hits the ground to score a point.

The Rules

To introduce the skill of heading players are allowed to serve the ball to themselves - without pressure from the opposition - in order to head the ball to a team mate.

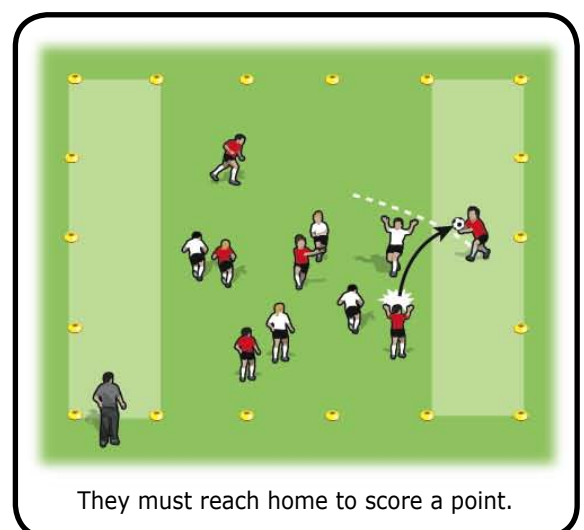
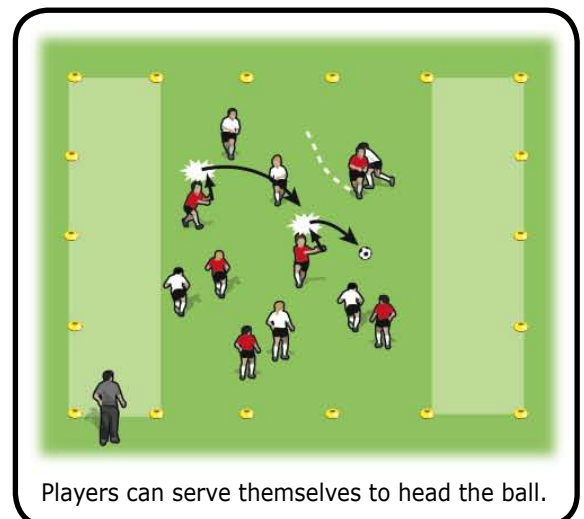
If they are not comfortable self serving, players can head the ball straight out of their hands.

Players must make themselves available to catch a headed pass before serving themselves to head to another team mate.

The object of the game is to get the ball home by heading to any team mate that has run into the end zone.

The defending team is not allowed to block the header. They can only prevent a goal by marking runners and intercepting the ball by catching it and starting their own counter attack.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Basic heading technique.

Set Up

Area: 30x30 yards with 5 yard end zones
 Players: 12, 2 teams of 6
 Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Eyes open"
 "Use forehead"
 "Arch back"
 "Contact the ball in the middle"

Progression

In order to move the ball faster, let players head directly from a header if space and timing allow it.

Hint

Use size 3 footballs and do not over inflate. For fun and to improve confidence a light plastic ball of any size could be used.

The Rules

Players start on opposite sides of the grid in pairs. One of the pairs starts with the ball.

The player with the ball jogs to the opposite corner, turns, and serves the ball to their team mate at around waist height so that the team mate is encouraged to dive to head the ball.

The team mate tries to score past the opposition pair with a diving header that must be below head height of the standing pair.

Opposition players encourage this by only being able to stop the ball with their head or chest, no hands. And they must not kneel.

After each attempt the opponent gets a go so that all players are constantly rotating position.

Quick attacks will be better before the opposition defenders are able to get back in position.

Play to a score - say 5 - before switching opposition. See how many wins your team can get.

Main Objectives

Diving headers.

Set Up

Area: 8x8 yard grids
 Players: 4, 2 teams of 2 per grid
 Equipment: 4 cones, 1 ball per grid

What To Call Out

"Attack the ball"

"Keep your hands in front"

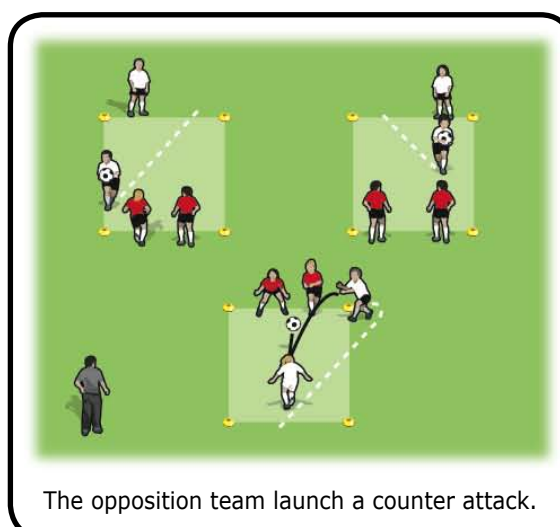
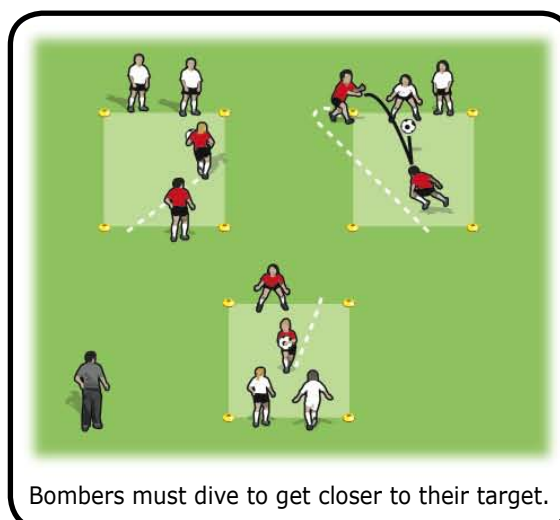
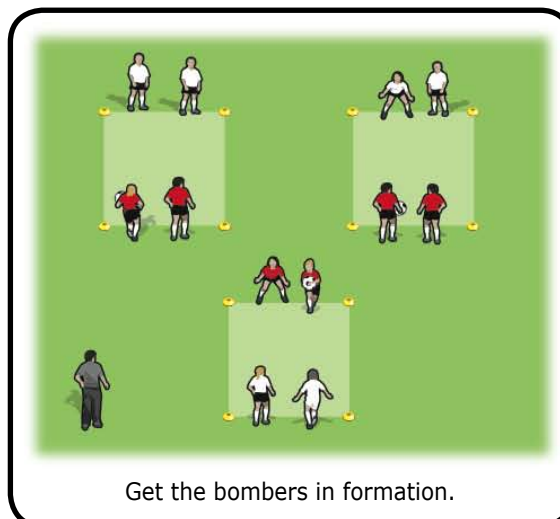
"Timing. Don't move forward too quickly"

Progression

Allow defenders to head the ball straight back across the opponent's line if they can to score. They can still get their turn afterwards.

Hint

Only do this practice on a soft surface. Use size 3 footballs and do not overinflate. Have plenty of spare balls ready.



The Rules

The groups go into each of the zones with the two end zones representing allied units, the middle zone play as an enemy unit. The ball is a package that must be delivered behind enemy lines.

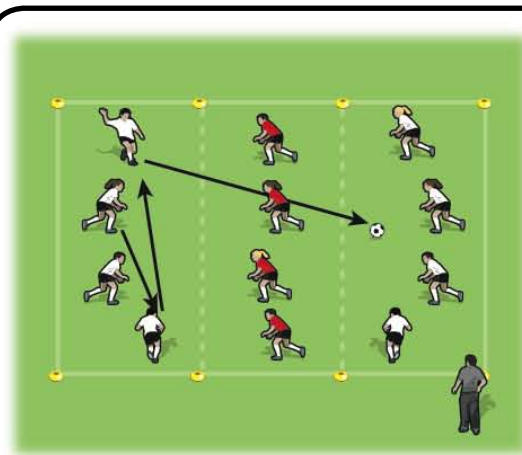
One of the units starts with the package, passing amongst themselves.

They must get the package into the opposite end zone with a pass – below head height – through the enemy's line.

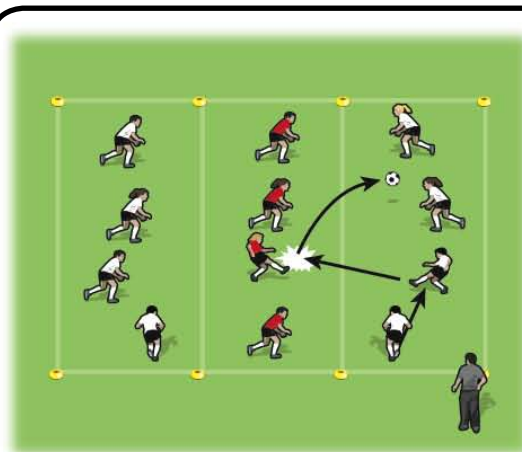
If the pass is intercepted or miss hit out of the area the unit must switch with the enemy.

Count the number of completed passes through enemy lines in a specified time - 3 minutes, say - if the ball has not been intercepted by then.

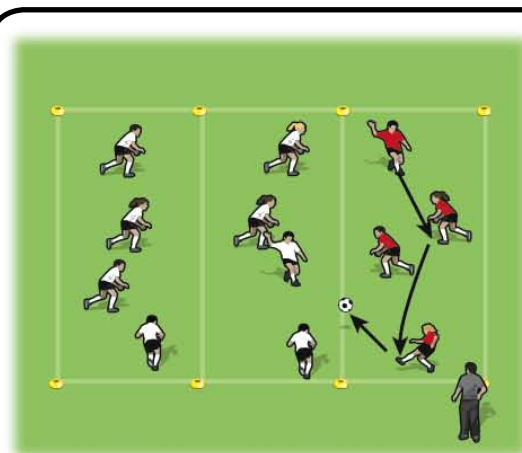
→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



The package is delivered behind enemy lines.



The enemy intercepts the package.



Lose the package and you must try to win it back.

Main Objectives

Passing through the opposition, getting behind defenders, defensive shape, anticipation.

Set Up

Area: 45x30 yard area divided into 3, 15 yard zones
 Players: 12, 3 teams of 4
 Equipment: 1 ball

What To Call Out

"Deliver the package"
 "Quick passing"
 "Drive the ball through a gap"

Progression

Allow one member of the enemy unit to apply pressure by entering one of the end zones to try and steal the package.

Similarly, one player can drop into the opposite end zone to try and intercept the package.

Hint

This is a more advanced game, calling on teamwork, decision making – when to press and when to drop off - and accurate passing.

The Rules

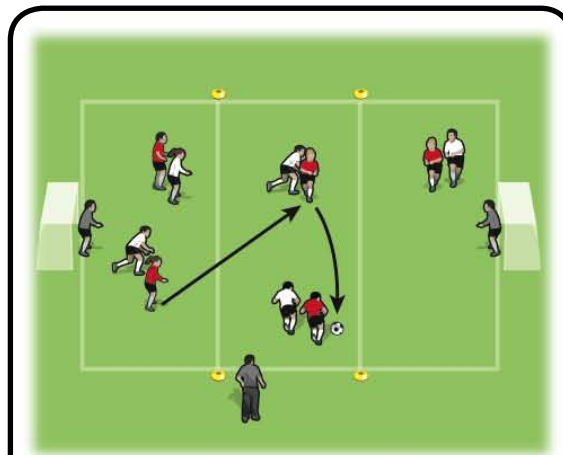
Outfield players choose an opponent to be marked by and to mark when their team is not in possession of the ball.

For a set time – 5 minutes, say – this is the only player that can tackle you and the only player that you can tackle.

Players must therefore escape to get space to receive the ball or take your player away so that a team mate can attack that space.

Defensively can you stay as close as possible and stop your player getting the ball or scoring?

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Choose an opponent to place under arrest.

Main Objectives

Creating space for self and others, first touch, dribbling, shooting, crossing, marking/tracking, intercepting.

Set Up

Area: 36x30 yards
Players: 12, 2 teams of 6
Equipment: 2 goals, 1 ball

What To Call Out

"You're under arrest, can you get away?"

"Can you stay close?"

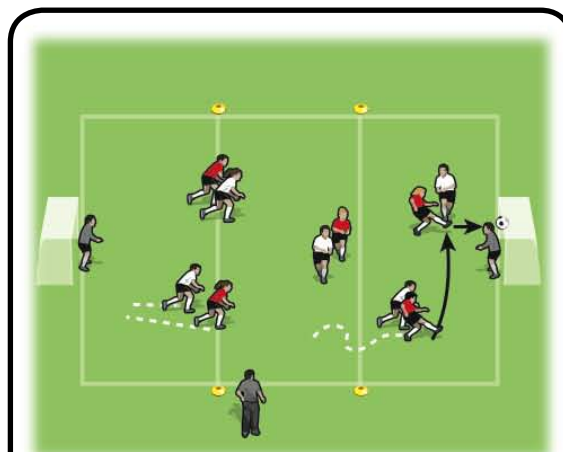
"Keep the ball in front of you"

Progression

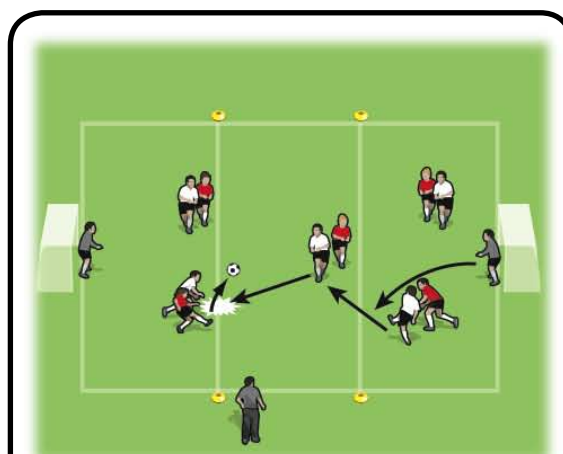
Add a floating player or players who play for both teams but cannot score. This will encourage use and recognition of a player in space.

Hint

This game gives a chance to work on the goalkeeper's distribution (rolling or throwing) into feet or space.



Escape your marker to receive the ball in space.



Only tackle the player you have under arrest.

The Rules

Place one player inside each of the 5x5 yard squares. 4 players dribble around inside the main area.

Two defenders – without a ball – look to knock balls out of the grid. Each ball they knock out is worth 1 point.

The game stops when they knock all 5 balls out of the area.

If a dribbling player wants a rest they can bump a player out of one of the safety zones.

When inside a safety zone, if a ball is passed to you and a player runs into your zone you must leave and dribble the ball into the main area.

If bumped out of a safety zone you can attempt to bump someone else out but cannot return to your own safety zone. It is important that the first touch takes the player into space and not into danger.

Players in a safety zone must try to control any passes into them!

Main Objectives

Dribbling, running with the ball, accurate passing, changeovers, first touch into space.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards with 5x5 yard squares inside
 Players: 12
 Equipment: Cones, 4 balls

What To Call Out

"Head up"
 "You've been bumped"
 "First touch into space"

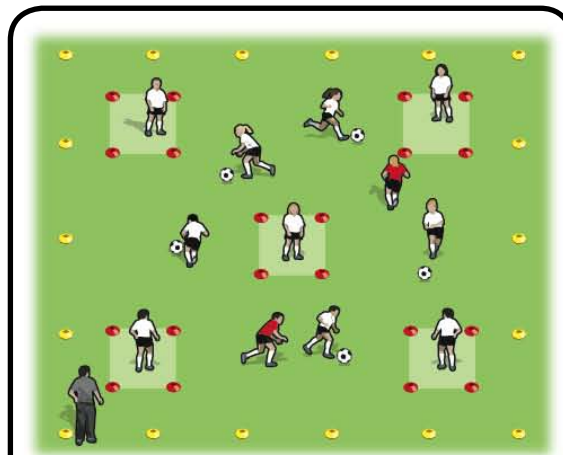
Progression

Reduce the size of the safety grids so passes must be more accurate.

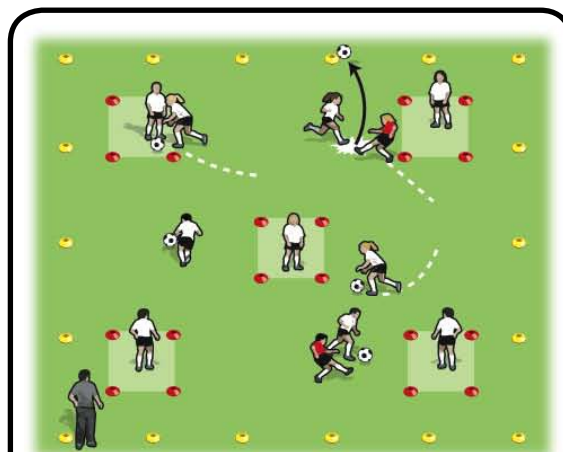
Allow players that have been knocked out of the game to become defenders.

Hint

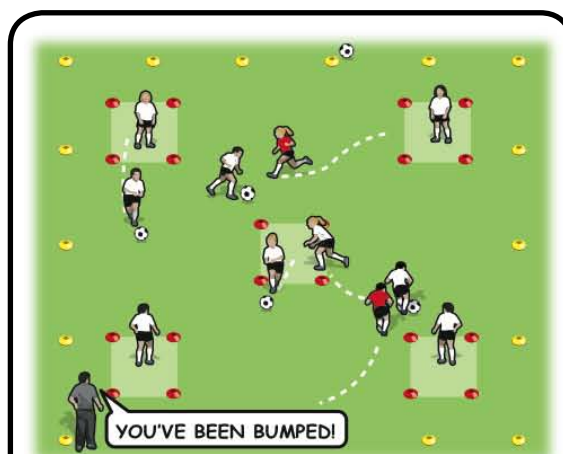
Discourage slide tackles. Rotate the defenders.



Players won't stay in the safety zones for long!



Defenders try to knock the balls out of the area.



Dribble into a safe zone and bump the player out.

The Rules

The players in tomb A pass the skull (ball) using one or two touches, depending on ability.

Two raiders from tomb B are called to come through the tunnels to steal the skull.

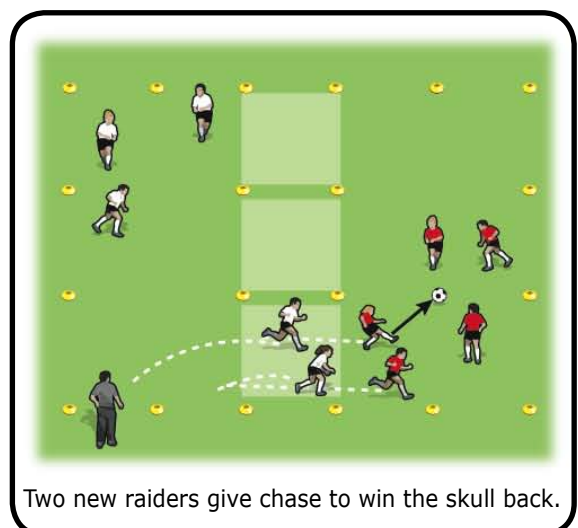
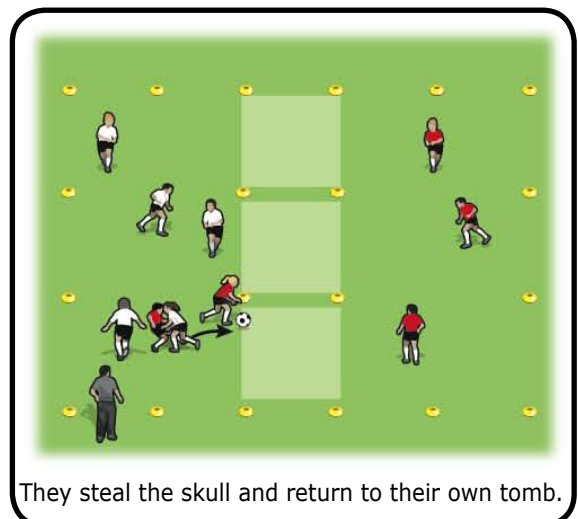
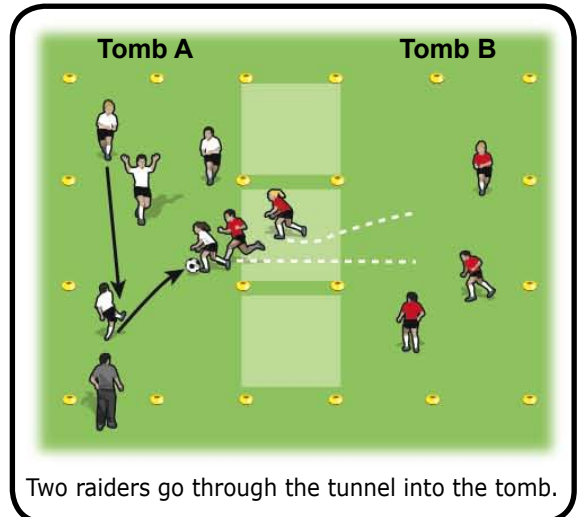
If successful they must dribble/run with the ball back through a tunnel into their own tomb and begin passing it with their team to keep it for as long as possible.

The team in tomb A now send through two raiders of their own – who must follow through the same tunnel that team B escaped through – to try and steal the skull back again.

At any point the coach can call for a third raider to go and help steal the skull.

If the skull is knocked out of the tomb the coach can choose which team restarts with a new skull.

A point can be scored by stealing the skull, or achieving a set number of passes – say 10 – when you are in possession of it.



Main Objectives

Possession, short passing, intercepting passes.

Set Up

Area: 50x30 yard area total comprising 2 20x30 yard areas joined by 3 10x10 yard escape tunnels.
 Players: 10, 2 teams of 5
 Equipment: Cones, balls

What To Call Out

"Tomb raiders go"
 "Good passing"
 "New skull coming in"

Progression

Allow the teams to choose how many raiders to send.

Allow skulls to be chipped over the tunnels to encourage aerial control. The skull cannot bounce within a tunnel.

Hint

Have ample footballs ready to play in. Don't do the obvious, see how players react to the ball going the opposite way. Roll the ball in to avoid head clashes on high balls.

The Rules

The teams start in opposite countries (end zones) with each player, numbered from 1 to 6, passing in order (1 to 2, 2 to 3, 3 to 4 and so on).

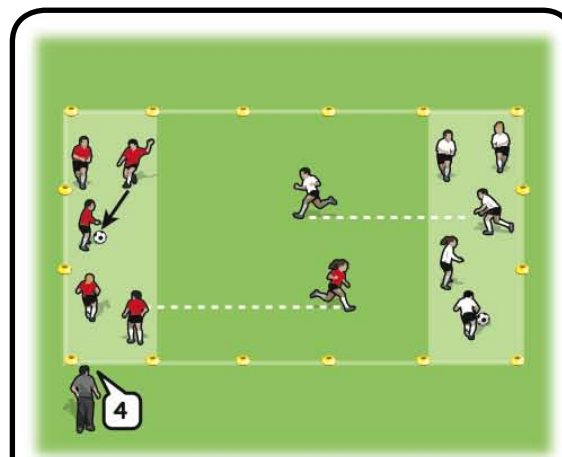
At any point the coach can shout out a number and the player with that number must sprint across the border and try to steal the opponent's ball. Both players go across at the same time.

The remaining players do not have to pass in sequence but must retain possession.

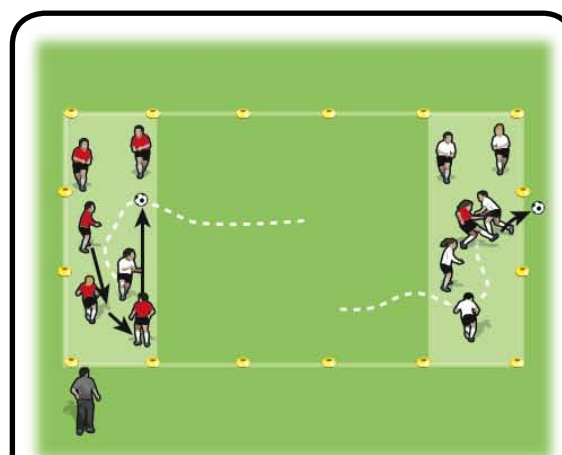
The first player to win the ball or knock it out of the opponent's country wins a point and both players return home to restart the sequence.

Ensure that all numbers are called but don't be predictable. The same number could go twice in a row.

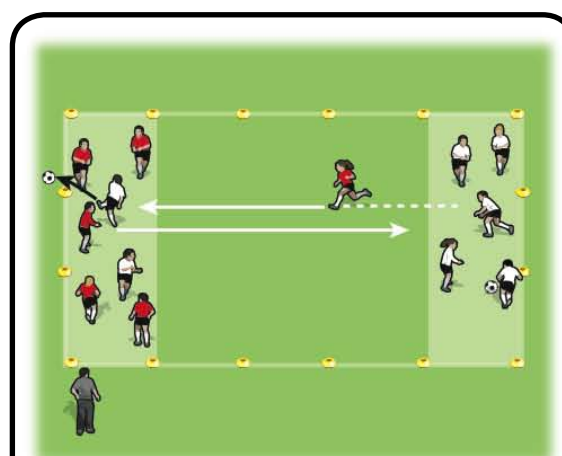
The first team to ten points wins.



The players sprint across the border.



The first player to win the ball scores a point.



Both players return to their country.

Main Objectives

Short passing, receiving passes, quick play, closing down, defending, intercepting passes.

Set Up

Area: 50x25 yard area with 10 yard end zones
 Players: 12, 2 teams of 6
 Equipment: 2 balls

What To Call Out

"Accurate passing"
 "Support your team mates"
 "Have a good first touch"

Progression

Call two numbers at a time to practice defending in pairs.

Alternatively, put restrictions on the number of touches allowed for the passing players.

Hint

If one team dominates the other then restrict the number of touches allowed for just that team or swap personnel between the teams.

The Rules

2 monkeys are placed inside the monkey cage (inner circle) and are guarded by 4 zoo keepers who start in the zoo itself (outer circle). 6 visitors start on the cones forming the perimeter of the zoo with a ball each.

The visitors must try to feed the monkeys by passing a ball to them.

The monkey must be able to control the pass and return it to the visitor for a point to count. The zoo keepers must try to stop the monkeys being fed by intercepting passes with their feet or head.

The monkeys cannot leave their cage, while the zoo keepers and visitors cannot enter the cage or leave the zoo itself.

Visitors can interchange balls in order to keep the defenders guessing and change the point of attack.

Play for 2 or 3 minutes and record the scores. The winners can be the visitors with most points scored or the zoo keepers with the least points scored against them, or both.

Main Objectives

Accuracy and weight of passing, control, first touch, anticipating and intercepting passes.

Set Up

Area: 10 yard radius outer circle with 3 yard radius inner circle
 Players: 12
 Equipment: 12 cones, 12 balls

What To Call Out

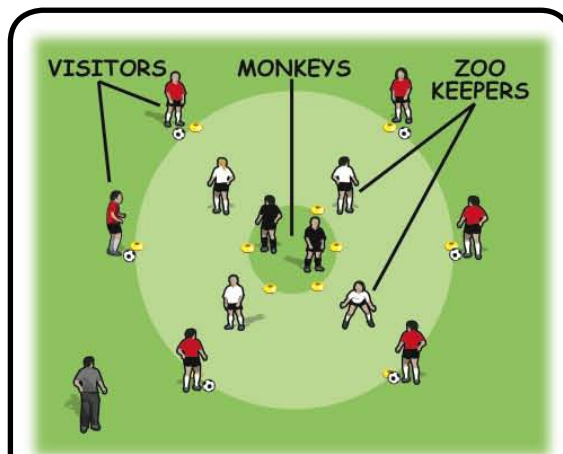
"Excellent pass"
 "Get the monkey's attention"
 "Well defended"

Progression

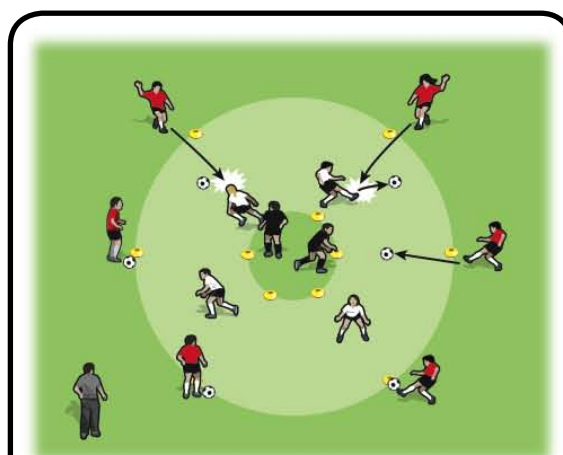
Insist on chipped passes that the monkeys can catch or control with their chest or head.

Hint

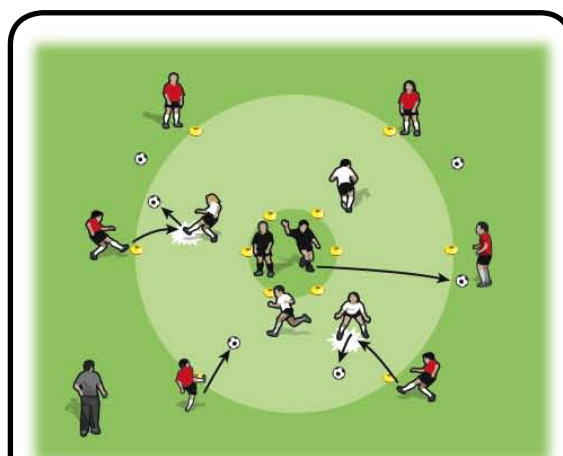
Ensure that players are fully rotated so they have a turn as the monkeys, zoo keepers and the visitors.



Zoo keepers don't like it when you feed the monkeys.



Try to stop the visitors by blocking their passes.



Monkeys receive a pass and return it to get fed.

The Rules

Split the area into 3 equal sized zones with a VIP (goalkeeper) and two bodyguards (defenders) in each zone. Place 4 balls beside each goal.

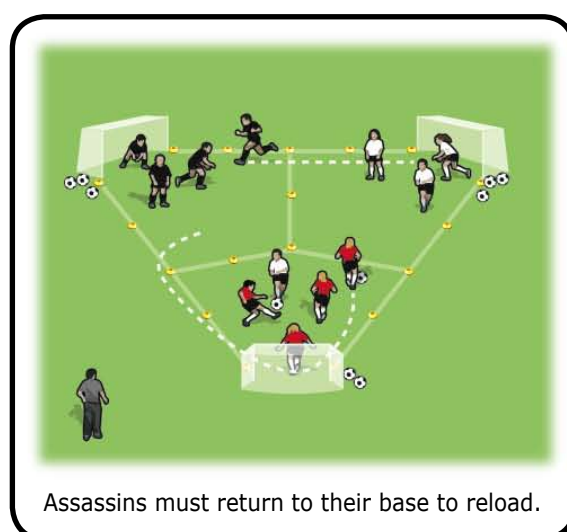
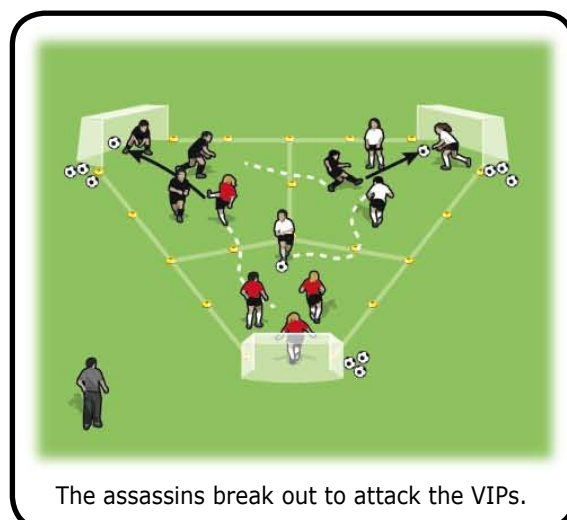
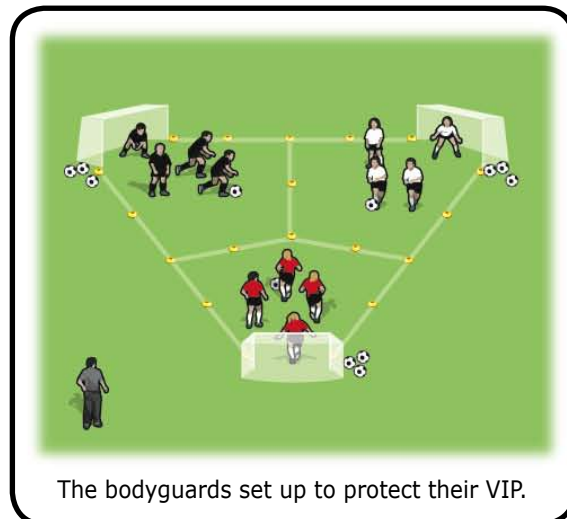
Bodyguards must stay in their zone and protect their VIP, who in turn must protect their goal.

Each team has one assassin who attempts to score points by beating the VIP to score a goal.

The assassin must be inside the opponent's zone to score in their goal creating 2v1 or 1v1 situations (2 assassins can go for the same VIP).

Each assassin has 4 shots and must return to their own goal to reload and collect a new ball after each shot.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



Main Objectives

Shooting, defending, goalkeeping.

Set Up

Area: 30x30x30 yard triangle
 Players: 12, 3 teams of 4
 Equipment: 12 balls, 3 mini goals (or 6 poles if no goals available)

What To Call Out

"Shoot on sight" – to the assassins

"React to ricochets" – loose balls

"Don't dive in" – to the bodyguards

Progression

If bodyguards win possession they can counter attack and gain extra points.

Open up the game to a freeplay situation. No-one is restricted to an area and anyone can score or defend. This will test decision making (rash attack or cautious defending?).

Hint

Rotate roles of players after each set of 4 shots. The winning team is the team who scores the highest from 16 balls.

The Rules

Two even numbered teams free play using as many skills as possible to get an opportunity to pass or shoot through one of the six pockets.

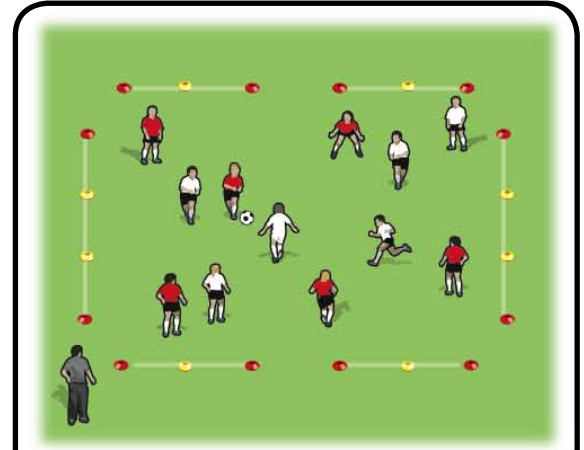
The other team try to prevent this and gain possession.

If a team pots a ball they retain possession and continue their break until they miss the target or lose the ball to a tackle or interception.

The first team to score 8 (ie 7 reds then the black) wins the game.

For any fouls or cheating the opposition team is awarded a free shot.

→ PASS → RUN - - - - - GROUND COVERED



UK pool rules, so 7 colours and the black to win.

Main Objectives

Passing, movement, support, shooting accuracy, general defending.

Set Up

Area: 40x30 yards, six gates like pockets on a pool table
 Players: 12, 2 teams of 6
 Equipment: Cones, 1 ball

What To Call Out

"Accurate passing"
 "It's 5-3" – for example
 "Team A is on the black"

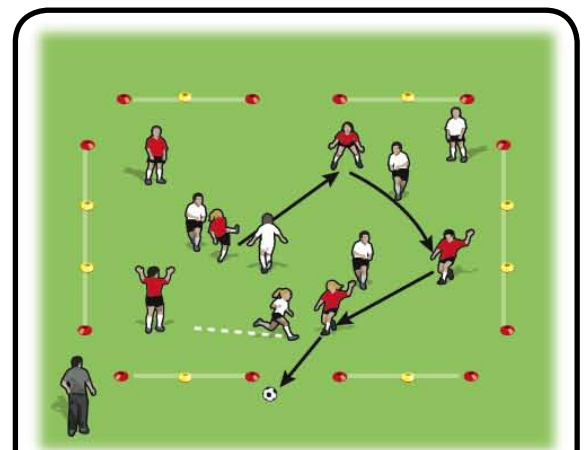
Progression

Limit the number of touches each player is allowed.

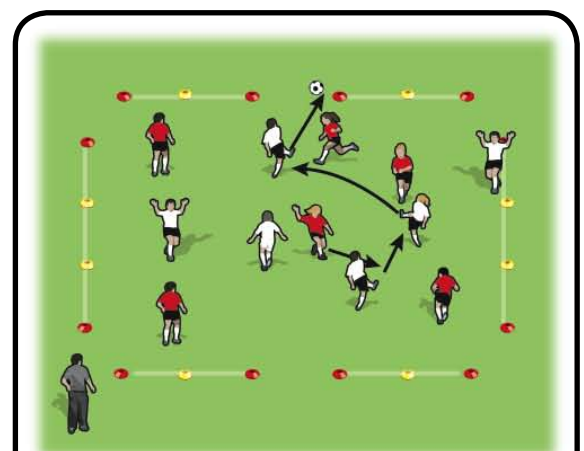
Alternatively, place a ball over each pocket that players must strike with the cue ball in order to pot. This encourages even greater accuracy and good pace on shots and passes.

Hint

Play one frame or best of 3 frames and change the personnel around.



Pot by passing or shooting into one of the pockets.



If a pot is missed the opposition gets a chance.