



GRASSROOTS CURRICULIM U10+

The Golden Age

Coach, skill development at this stage should be well structured, positive and FUN and should concentrate on developing the ABC's of Agility, Balance and Coordination plus speed. Encourage your players to take part in unstructured play, every day, with their friends.

Learning to read the movements going on around them are critical skills to be developed at this age. Playing small-sided games, 3v3, 4v4 etc. can develop players' ability to read what other players are going to do based on their movements. Let your players make decisions, expose them to working out problems and coming up with solutions.

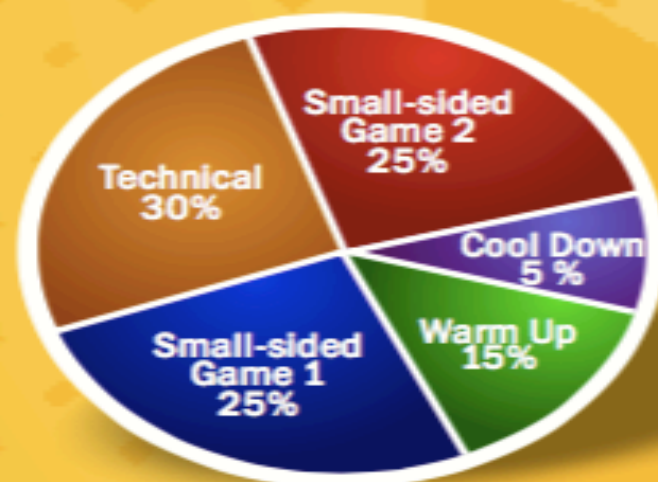
Practice Focus

Coach, the above chart indicates how your practice sessions should be structured for players in the Learn To Train development stage. Practice duration should range between 45 and 70 minutes.

Warm up - Getting the players prepared to practice and play, mentally and physically. Incorporate various dynamic movements.

Small-sided Game 1 - Two teams e.g. 5v5 play with direction and targets. Just let them play!

Technical - Pick a theme e.g. passing, receiving, dribbling etc. and pick an exercise where lots of repetition can occur. Coach the players using a variety of teaching styles.



Small-sided Game 2 - Here is an opportunity for the players to apply what you have just practiced with them. Let them play and try it. Mistakes are allowed!

Cool Down - The players have a chance to cool down, stretch and review the key points from practice.

Role of the Learn to Train Coach

- Provide fun, safe and enjoyable activity.
- Provide well-organized practice and games.
- Provide stimulating activities that promote decision-making and game awareness.
- Communicate appropriately with children.



The U8-U11 female and U9-U12 male age group is the third stage of soccer development that our players go through, commonly known as the “golden age of learning”.

The effect of the role model is very important at this stage. Children begin to identify with famous players and successful teams, and they want to learn imaginative skills. Skill demonstration is very important and the players learn best by “doing”.

Repetitions are important to develop technical excellence, but creating a fun and challenging environment is still essential for stimulating learning.

***Create a fun and challenging environment
for players to practice and compete in.***

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Listening	2	2	1	1
Cooperation	2	2	1	1
Communication	1	1	1	1
Sharing	2	1	1	1
Problem-solving	2	2	1	1
Decision-making	2	2	1	1
Empathy	3	2	1	1
Patience	3	2	1	1
Respect/Discipline	2	2	1	1
Fair play/Honesty	2	1	1	1

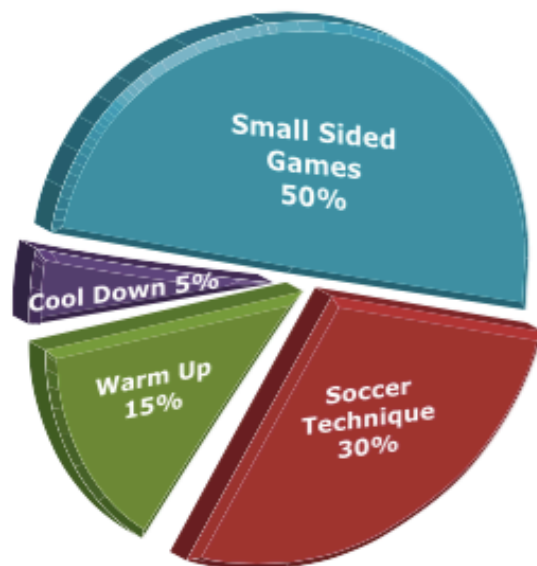
DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
TACTICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Possession	2	2	2	2
Transition	2	2	2	2
Combination Play	2	2	2	1
Switching Play	4	4	4	3
Counter Attacking	4	4	4	4
Playing out from the back	2	2	2	1
Attacking Principles	3	3	3	3
Zonal Defending	4	4	4	4
Pressing	3	2	2	2
Retreat	3	3	3	3
Recovery	3	3	3	3
Compactness	3	3	3	2

DEVELOPMENT STAGE	LEARN TO TRAIN			
PHYSICAL	U9	U10	U11	U12
Agility	1	1	1	1
Balance	1	1	1	1
Coordination	1	1	1	1
Stamina	2	2	2	1
Strength	2	2	2	1
Speed	1	1	1	1
Suppleness	2	2	2	2
Acceleration	1	1	1	1
Reaction	1	1	1	1
Basic Motor Skills	1	1	1	1
Perception	1	1	1	1
Awareness	1	1	1	1

PRIORITY KEY	1 = HIGH	2 = MID	3 = LOW	4 = NOT APPLICABLE
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“Unlike other sports, where the coach is responsible for picking the right tactics during the game, soccer truly is a “player’s game” –the coach can try to set the strategy, but the players have to make the decisions on the field. That’s why it’s so important to let them learn by playing.”

Thorsten Damm
Heidelberg University -Germany



Learn to Train PRACTICE OBJECTIVES

TECHNICAL	Improve possession and transition
PHYSICAL	Improve speed, agility, balance, coordination with/without the ball
TACTICAL	Minimal introduction at the older ages of this stage
SOCIAL	Cooperation with teammates in collective tasks during practice
PSYCHOLOGICAL	Create positive, challenging learning environment

Learn to Train PRACTICE CONTENT

TECHNICAL	PHYSICAL	TACTICAL	SOCIAL
70%	17%	3%	10%

	U9	U10	U11	U12
Game	7v7	7v7	9v9	9v9
Practice	50 min max	50 min max	50 min max	60 min max
Prc x/week	2/3	3	4	4/5

"Our children are as talented as any European nation and we need to believe in our ability and devote our resources that make becoming a Canadian International the ultimate goal. We have certainly begun to identify the necessary steps to improve our training facilities, equipment, and finally implementing LTPD which will ultimately improve the coaching standard. If we are going to develop top quality players on a consistent basis we need to provide them with an outlet to play in and to provide them with highest qualified coaches who have the necessary training, qualifications and experience. We need to provide kids with the proper football environment they will require in order to play at the highest levels. "

*Paul Stalteri
Canada, Tottenham Hotspur FC, Werder Bremen*

UNDER 9 – UNDER 10 PLAYERS

As we move up the age ladder to the U9-10 level there are many differences we must attend to in order to provide an optimal experience for young players of this age. However, there are also many similarities. Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this end, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we did at the younger ages. Creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is key. Players at this age should still work on ball mastery and demonstrate growing familiarity and comfort ability with a ball at their feet.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARN TO TRAIN

U9- U10 PLAYERS

- Attention span lengthens from U8—they start to show the ability to sequence thought and actions
- They start to think ahead and think “If this, then that”
- They are more inclined towards wanting to play soccer rather than being told to play
- Demonstrate increased self-responsibility – bringing a ball, water and all gear should now be their complete responsibility
- Children at this age begin to become aware of peer pressure
- Players greatly affiliate with their team or their coach—“I play for United” or “I play for Coach Frank’s team”
- There is a wide continuum of maturity evident on most teams. This is still a crucial age for technical skill development

UNDER 11 -UNDER 12 PLAYERS

Typically players of this age start to begin to understand the basic simple tactical situations of the game and are more aware of movement off the ball and the reasons for tactical choices. Problem-solving becomes systematic and these players tend to learn quickly. Children of this age typically are beginning to develop abstract awareness, so they can understand coaches when we talk about space and runs off of the ball. However, just because they understand these basic tactical concepts does not mean we should focus on these concepts entirely. Players are still developing technically at this age, especially as they go through growth spurts and awkward phases. It is quite common to look out at a U12 field and see players that are physically the size of adults. Yet, other U12 players appear as if they could still be in the 3rd grade. These children are all growing at different rates and undergoing physical, mental, emotional, and social changes. As coaches, we need to be sensitive to these changes and their social implications when coaching this age group. Some players may pick up skills quickly, whereas others may struggle. However, it may be the case that this is simply the result of differences in maturation. In a year, the slower developer may surpass the player who developed earlier. For this reason we need to be patient and keep open minds about all players through these years. They are aware of their struggles more than anyone else as peer evaluation is omnipresent at these ages. When we see them struggling, it is important for us to help them and to keep the game fun.

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF LEARN TO TRAIN U11- U12 PLAYERS

- All children are maturing at different rates
- Players need to warm-up and perform dynamic movement---muscle pulls and other nagging injuries are common otherwise
- Players will typically understand elemental abstract concepts and hypothetical situations (basic tactics and strategy)
- They like to solve problems
- Peer evaluation is a constant
- Egos are sensitive
- Coordination may depend on whether or not they are in a growth spurt
- Technique still needs to be reinforced constantly
- Playing too much can lead to overuse injuries
- Playing too much and not feeling like they have a choice in the matter can lead to burnout and drop-out
- This is the dawn of tactics!
- Keep asking the players to be creative and to take risks---we never want them to stop doing these things
- Ask for feedback from them---they will tell you how things are going
- Try to hand over leadership and ownership of the team to them; give them soccer homework and challenges
- Keep it fun!!!

I use a global method. Yes, I use direct methods when preparing our organization, but I also use guided discovery where I create the practice, dictate the aim, and the players come up with different solutions

*Jose Mourinho
Real Madrid Head Coach*

LEARN TO TRAIN - PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to develop ball mastery in a larger environment with more teammates and opponents
- Start to develop other surfaces to control the ball
- Develop the ability to control the ball and look, Introduce decision-making for the next play and apply the proper technique
- Develop the ability to run with the ball towards goal and away from goal to gain space and use width
- Develop dribbling 1v1 using different fakes and changes of direction, shielding at the older ages of the stage
- Develop passing the ball using different surfaces of both feet
- Introduce combination plays with 2 or 3 players
- Develop shooting skills, at longer distances. Introduce, volleys, bent shots and chips using different surfaces
- Introduce the use of width at u9 and u10 and depth at u11 and u12
- Develop the ability to look up and read GK position to make a good decision and apply proper technique.

LEARN TO TRAIN - COACHING METHODOLOGY

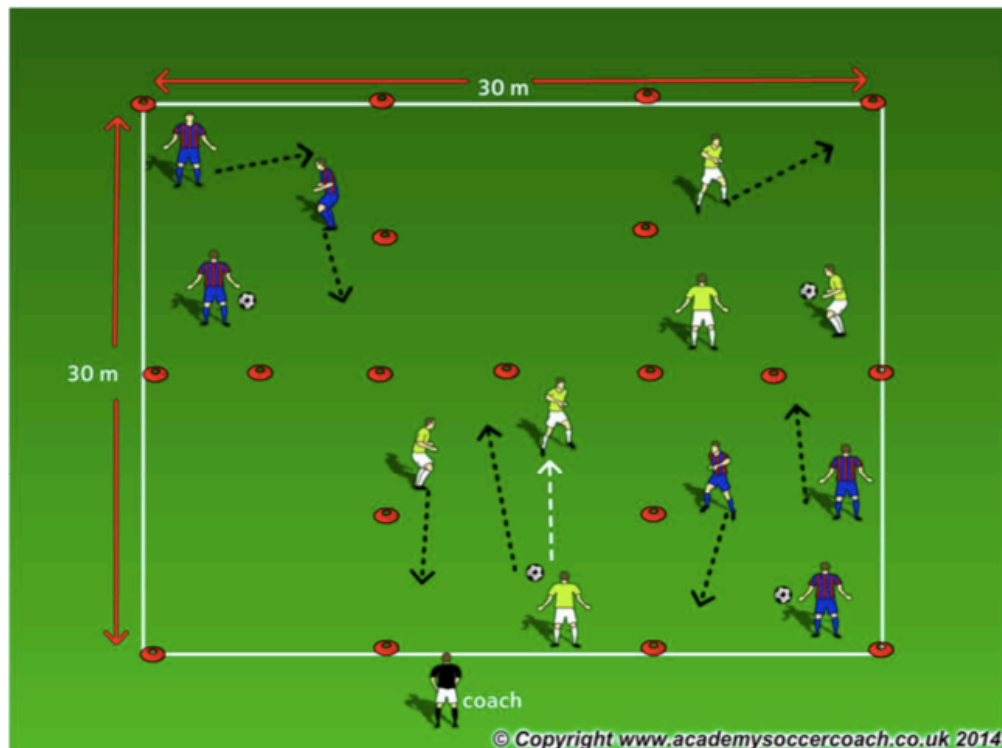
- Small-sided games, allow the game to be the teacher
- Player centred- allow the players to make decisions
- Use Coaching Key Factors to teach the players
- Demonstrate what you would like the players to do
- Keep information positive, brief and concise
- Create a positive learning environment
- Set appropriate challenges
- Practices should have a theme e.g. passing or shooting
- Use a variety of interventions e.g. question and answer, guided discovery, command
- Consider a young player's self esteem
- Avoid children standing in lines

Learn To Train - Coaching Measures

The players have now progressed into the Learn to Train phase of their development. At the later stages of the Learn to Train phase the concept of tactics are slowly introduced. The focus is still on the technical skills required in the game, with small-sided games being the main teaching tool used.

TECHNICAL		
Dribbling	Right and left, various surfaces	Maintain close control at pace in tight situations
Shooting	Right and left, various surfaces	Accurate, more powerful shots from longer distance, bent, chip and volley
Running with the ball	Right and left feet	Running at various speeds with the ball under control with head up/eyes up
Ball Control	Ball mastery	Continue improvement of ball mastery in reduced spaces; more teammates and opponents
Passing	Right and left, various surfaces	Player should be passing the ball accurately over distances 10m – 25m. Intro passing with the chest
Receiving	Right, left, chest, thighs	Receiving the ball from ground and air whilst under some pressure
Heading	Using forehead, eyes on ball	No heading a fully inflated ball until 12 years old. Deflated softer ball can be used to get technique
Shielding the ball	Using body to protect the ball	Introduction to shielding, understanding how to use the body to protect the ball with head up/eyes up
Crossing	Right and left foot, various surfaces	Crossing the ball into the penalty area, using various surfaces. Introduction of various types of crosses.
Finishing	Scoring from close range	First touch finishing, volleys, passes, shots from close distances.
1v1 Defending	Defending as an individual	Pressing, preventing forward play, preventing crosses

TACTICAL		
Possession	Individual and team's ability to retain the ball	Introduce later in the stage. Understand angles and distances of support and that player mobility will allow team possession to take place.
Transition	Recognizing when the ball is lost or retained	Introduce later in the stage. Changing from attacking to defending and vice versa.
Combination Play	Player awareness to combination opportunities	Introduce later in the stage. Recognizing when wall pass, take over, set up etc. are available to play.
Switching play	Taking up correct positions to allow the switch to take place	Introduce later in the stage. The ability to pass the ball from one side of the field to the other, quickly
Playing out from the back	Confident & comfortable playing close to their own goal	Introduce later in the stage. The ability to be confident with the ball and to build the attack from close to their own goal
Attacking Principles	Players understanding	Introduce later in the stage. Introduce players to the 5 attacking principles of play
Pressing	Understanding when to press	Introduce later in the stage. Individual pressing, closing down the ball carrier
Retreat	Understanding when to retreat and to where	Introduce later in the stage. Individually and as a group to get between the ball and the goal.
Recovery	Understanding when and where to recover too	Introduce later in the stage. After getting beat, making correct recovery runs to get in a good defensive position.



organization: A grid of 30 mx30 m divided into equal smaller boxes. 3 players in each group. One ball between each group.
 Procedure: Players move in their box, passing, and receiving, and perform different movements. I.e: Step over, Matthew's move. On the coach's call, players move to another box.

Time frame. 12-15 minutes

Emphasis:

Changing direction
 Foot - eye Coordination
 Aware of surroundings
 Balance
 FUN!

Psychological

Confidence
 Being safe

Technical

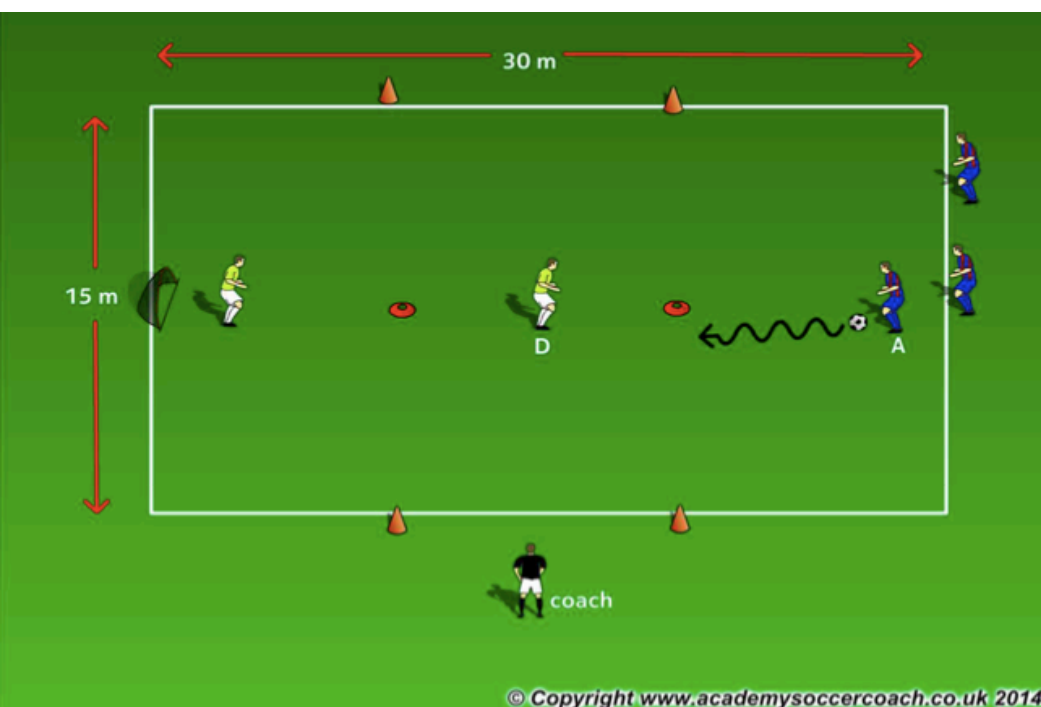
Dribbling
 Passing, receiving
 Running with the ball

Physical

A,B,C's
 Change of Direction

Social

Listening to cues
 Communicating
 Peer interaction



Organization: 30 mx15 m. divided to three equal grids. one player as defender in each grid. Attacker runs to 1st defender and performs a dribbling move, when he/she passes the first defender, then she/he runs to 2nd defender performing different dribbling move, and when pass him/her can score in the goal.

Progression: This exercise could be done in 2v1 situation, working on when to pass, and when to dribble.

Rotate players.

Emphasis:

Changing direction

Change of speed

Agility, Balance, Coordination

Shooting, finishing

FUN!

Psychological

Positive reinforcement
Confidence
Being safe
Fun

Technical

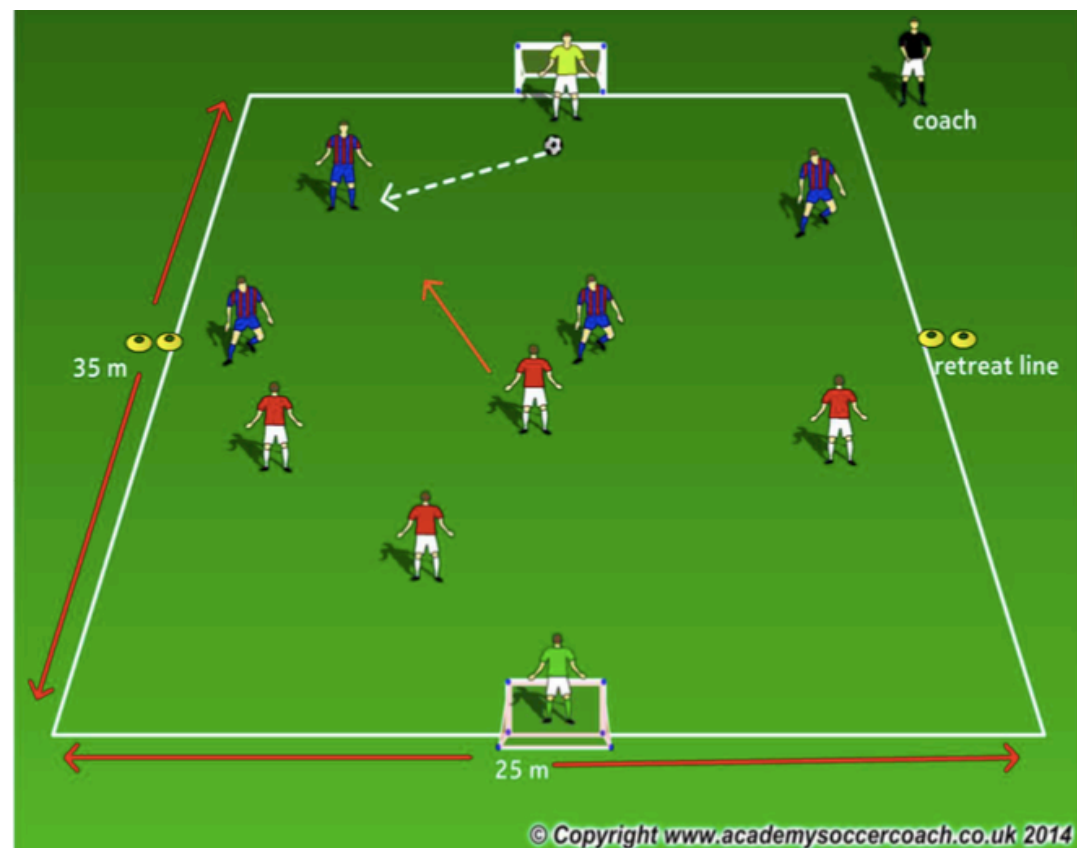
Dribbling
1v1
attacking/defending
passing,
Shooting,

Physical

Speed
A,B,C's
Change of Direction

Social

Listening
Communicating
Peer interaction



5v5 small sided game with the retreat line.

If you have odd numbers, you can have the extra player become a neutral player in the game. He/she plays with team in possession.

Emphasis:

Running with the ball

Dribbling

1v1

Changing direction

Change of speed

Agility, Balance, Coordination

Imagination

Creativity

FUN!

Psychological

Fun

Confidence

Being safe

Technical

Dribbling

1v1

Shooting

Physical

Speed

A,B,C's

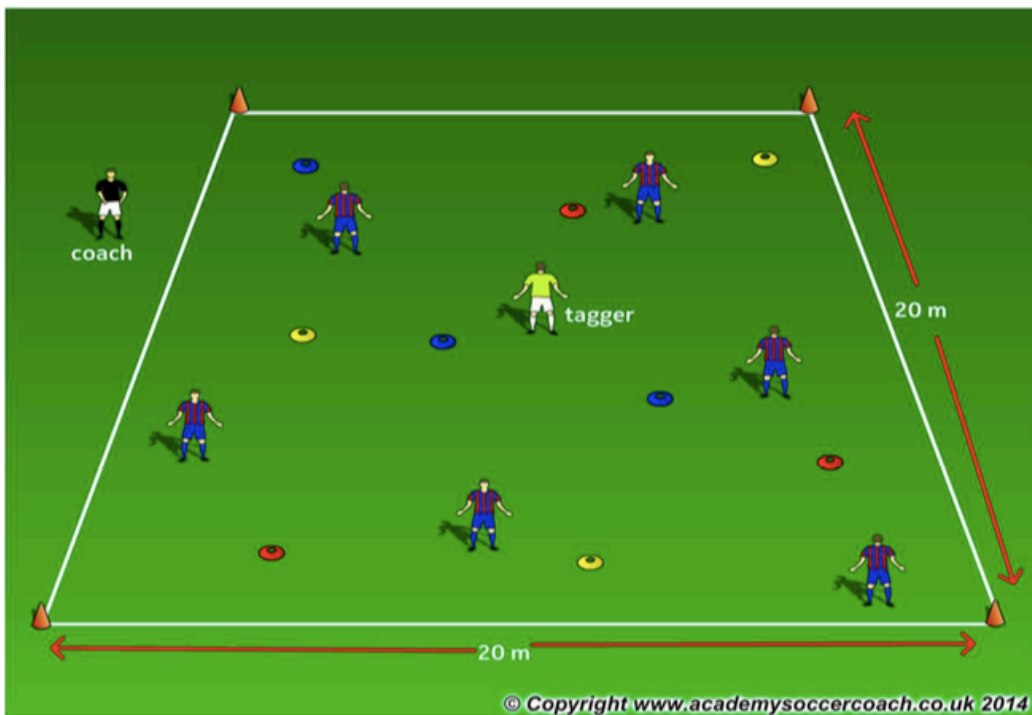
Change of Direction

Social

Listening

Communicating

Fun with friends



Cone tag:
Organization: Mark out a 20 mx20 m field with different - coloured cones.
 6-8 players and one tagger.
Procedure: The tagger tries to tag the players, The coach calls out a cone colour: Cones of this colour can be used briefly as safety zone, but each cone only protects one player. If tagger, tag a player, he/she become a new tagger.

Time frame.12-15 minutes

Emphasis:

Changing direction
 Running
 Spatial awareness
 FUN!

<p><u>Psychological</u></p> <p>Confidence Playing under pressure Fun</p>	<p><u>Technical</u></p> <p>Dribbling passing Receiving 1v1</p>
<p><u>Physical</u></p> <p>A,B,C's Change of Direction Speed</p>	<p><u>Social</u></p> <p>Listening Communicating Team work</p>



Organization: A 9v9 size goal, a few balls, 10 to 12 players. Mark out field as shown (18 yrd. box if its possible) , and 3 cones 10 m from 18 yrd line.

Procedure: The first passer initiate the 3v2 with a pass into the penalty box. (extrea defender juggles on the side, and will be rotate each round)

Attackers can only shoot after receiving and controlling the ball. When the first ball goes out of hte field or into the goal, the next passer passes into penalty box. Team switch their role after two or three rounds.

Emphasis:

Turning
Changing direction
Shooting
Passing
Receiving
FUN!

Psychological

Confidence

Technical

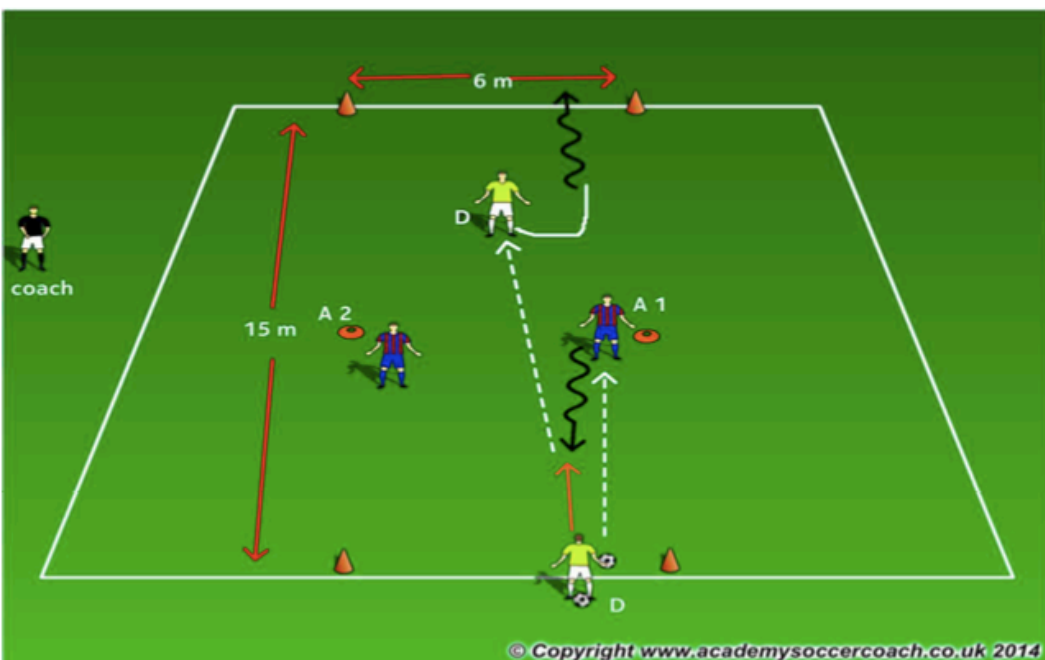
Finishing
Shooting

Physical

A,B,C's
Change of Direction

Social

Listening
Communicating



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Individual Defending: (defending the line)
Organization: Mark the field (15 mx6 m) , it could be varied depend on the age and the ability of players.
procedure: Divide players to two teams. One team (attackers) receive the ball from the defender and try to pass the defender and cross the line.
 Attacker will rotate every round.
 same procedure will take place on the other side.
progression: 2 attacker vs 1 defender
 If defender intercepts the ball, will pass it to his teammate on the other half, which will receive, turn and cross the line .

Time frame. 12-15 minutes

Emphasis:

Patience
 Body position
 1v1 mentality
 Angle of approach
 Element of surprise
 Speed of approach
 Fun!

Psychological

Decision making
 Confidence
 1v1 defending
 mentality

Technical

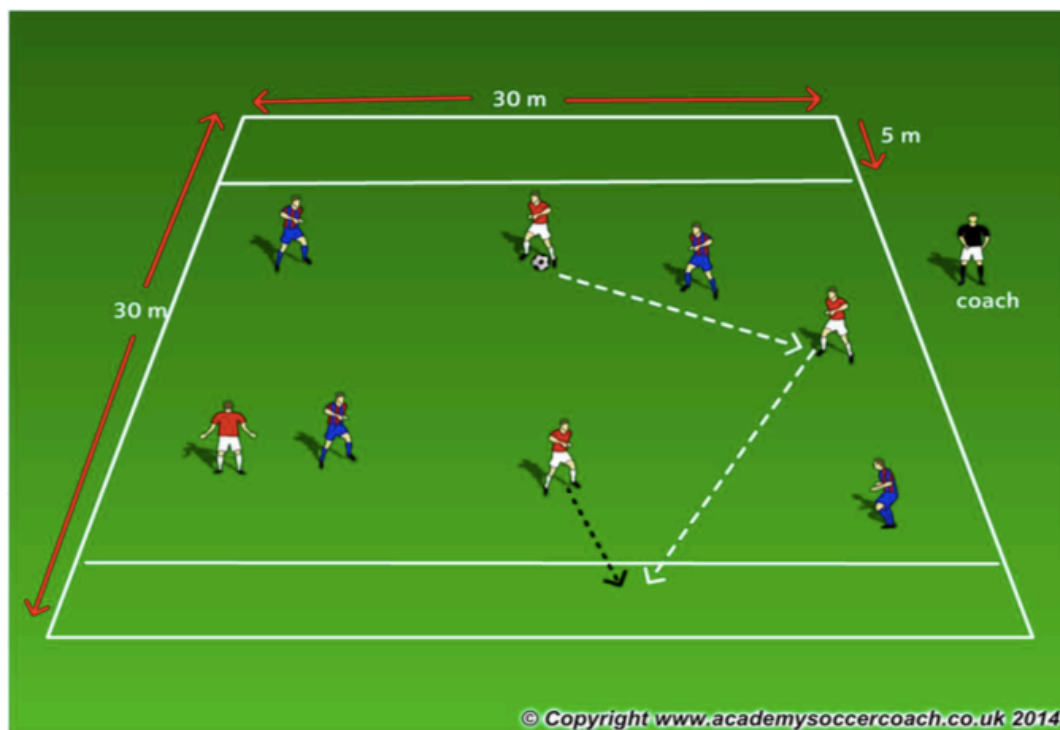
Angle of Approach
 Body position
 Time of tackle

Physical

A,B,C's
 Change of Direction

Social

Listening
 Communicating



4v4 small sided game with two end zones.
Organization: Mark a field of 30 mx30 m, and two end zone as shown in diagram.
Procedure: Each team gain a point by pass the ball into end zone which received by teammate .
 Players can't wait for the ball in end zone, they must run to end zone to receive the ball.

Time frame. 12-15 minutes

Emphasis:

Running with the ball

Dribbling

1v1

Changing direction

Change of speed

Agility, Balance, Coordination

Imagination

FUN!

Psychological

Decision making

Confidence

Being safe

Technical

Receiving

Dribbling

passing

Physical

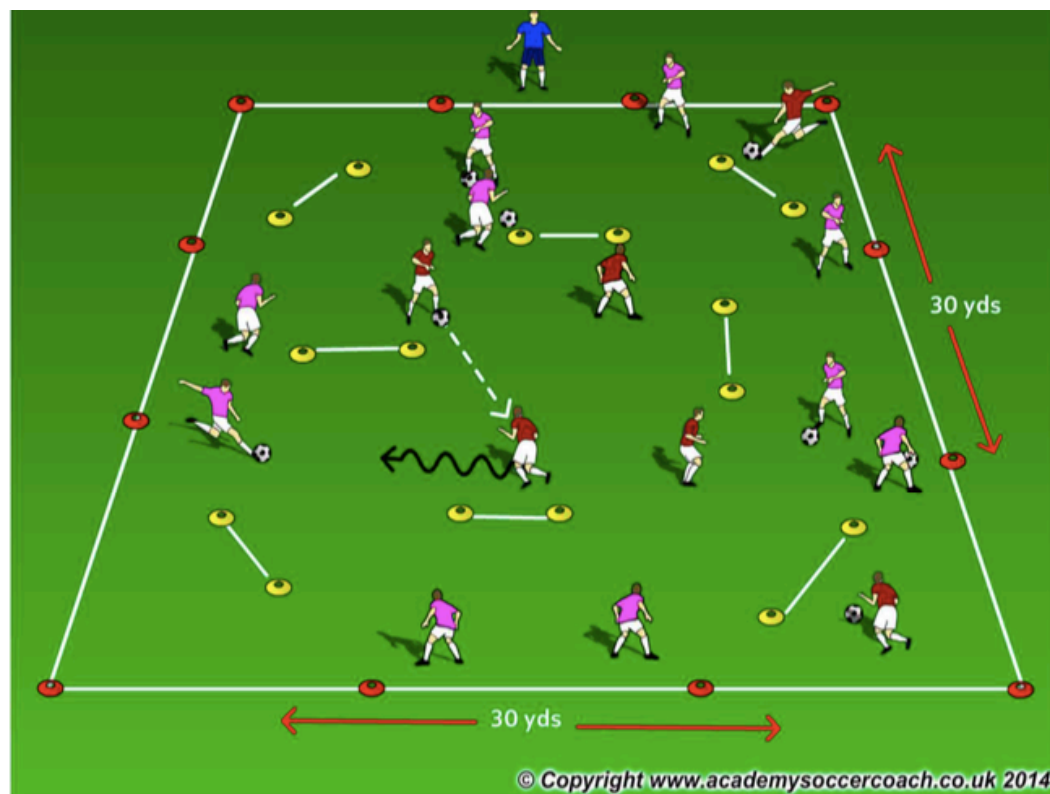
A,B,C's

Change of Direction

Social

Listening

Communicating



Passing and Moving
 Players are placed into 2s and pass and move freely inside 30x30 area.
 Focus should be on how the player passes and receives the ball.
 To make it fun for the players add gates into the area and on the command of "Shopping" players look to pass the ball through the gates. each gate =1point

Emphasis:

Changing direction
 Spatial Awareness
 Passing
 Receiving
 Support
 FUN!

Psychological

Confidence
 Playing under pressure

Technical

Passing
 Receiving
 1v1

Physical

A,B,C's
 Change of Direction
 Speed
 Support

Social

Listening
 Communicating
 Team work



S plays ball into the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper now looks to distribute the ball to 1 of his/her team mates. As soon as the player receiving the ball touches the ball the 2 strikers are released to pressure the ball. The team in possession now look to get the ball to T or S to score a point. If the Strikers win possession they head to goal. All players rotate through all positions.

Time frame. 12-15 minutes

Emphasis:

Patience
Body position
Passing/receiving
Support
Decision making
Awareness
Learning different roles
FUN!

Psychological

Decision making
Confidence
Risk assessment

Technical

Passing
Receiving
Penetrating pass

Physical

A,B,C's
Speed of play
Hip flexor rotation

Social

Team play
Communication
Co-operation

Time frame. 12-15 minutes

Emphasis:

Patience
Body position
Passing/receiving
Support
Decision making
Awareness
FUN!

Psychological

Decision making
Confidence
Risk assessment

Technical

Passing
Receiving
Penetrating pass

Physical

A,B,C's
Speed of play

Social

Team play
Communication
Co-operation



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5V5 with the Retreat line.

If you have odd numbers you can have the extra player become a neutral player in the game.