

STAGE 1 - EARLY CHILDHOOD (3-5 YEARS OLD)

The introduction to soccer stage coincides with the onset of independence from parents and increased self confidence in most children. Children also start to begin to play cooperatively with others. This does not mean however parents should fully pass the responsibility for learning to the club coach. The parent has a very important role in encouraging the child to play at home. Practice sessions should occur once or twice per week and players should be encouraged to play multiple sports and activities.

DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- + Players should learn the fundamental movement skills of running (forwards, backwards and sideways), jumping, turning, twisting and bending (lowering center of gravity to form a solid base).
- + The ball should be involved all the time.

KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 1		
Physically	Psychological/Social	Cognitive/Mental
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tires easily and recovers quickly. 2. Learns best by being physically active. 3. Needs to repeat activities that are well known and mastered. 4. Mainly uses large muscle movement, fine motor skills developing, but more difficult to master. 5. Basic motor skill developing, needs to combine skills in simple games. 6. Boys and girls have equal ability. 7. Center of gravity is higher, resulting in issues with balance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Likes to play/work on their own, egocentric. 2. Easily motivated. 3. Enjoys initiating activities. 4. Enjoys being praised for endeavors. Sensitive to criticism and does not enjoy failure. 5. Developmentally advanced players start to become more independent and attempt to exercise more control over own environment. 6. Limited attention span, 15-20 minutes. 7. Frustration can come quickly. 8. Has a strong desire for affection and attention from adults. 9. Seeks social approval. 10. Experimental, exploratory behavior is part of development. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasingly able to use visual instructions (play them out of their mind), although observing demonstrations is more concrete. 2. Beginning to take into account ideas and emotions of others. 3. Inconsistent attention span. 4. Moving from being adventurous to be cautious. 5. Interests can be short and quick changing. 6. Imaginative, spontaneous and creative.

DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS TRANSLATED TO COACHING PLAYERS IN STAGE 1

Child centered coaching requires a commitment on behalf of the coach/adult to embrace a natural starting point in development for each player. The coaches role is not to create parity (all players the same), but to nurture them to a level consistent with their individual commitment, attitude, enthusiasm and talent. To ensure participation in soccer is enjoyable for players, adults, parents and coaches of 4 and 5 year olds need to embrace and work with the development characteristics, and not against them.

TRANSLATED TO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THIS MEANS

1. Significant emphasis on fundamental movement skills – running, jumping, skipping, throwing etc
2. Focusing on ball familiarization and dribbling skills – one ball per child.
3. Sessions that are simple, fun, have variety and use large muscle.
4. Selecting activities that do not place undue stress on the muscles, bones and energy systems of the body.
5. Repeating activities regularly – constant change and insufficient reinforcement negatively affects learning.
6. Including activities that take a short time to complete (5-10 minutes), due to short attention span.
7. Camouflaging and concealing technical information by using names, characters and stories.
8. Encouraging trial and error, keeping instruction to a minimum.
9. Using equipment and props to increase complexity but continue to make the sessions fun – hurdles, hoops, ladders, bean bags, etc.
10. Include competitive games, but emphasize successes other than just winning (i.e. effort).
11. Providing considerable encouragement.
12. Keep instruction to a minimum and activity regular.
13. Include 'games and matches' in every session – no need for a separate day for games.
14. Avoiding temptations to place players in specialist positions (i.e. full back, forward or goal keeper).
15. Continually reinforce effort and constantly praise players.

ACTIVITIES LISTING FOR STAGE 1: PLAYERS 3-5 YEARS OLD

22 TAKE ON REPETITION

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, running with the ball and ball mastery.

23 FROGGER

- + Stages 1, 2 & 3 - 3-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, Attacking and defending 1v1 and ball mastery.

24 FORT KNOX

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, Attacking and defending 1v1 and ball mastery.

25 WHAT'S THE TIME MR WOLF?

- + Stage 1 - 3-5 year old players.
- + Top 3 themes: Ball mastery, turning and dribbling.

26 STICKY DONUT

- + Stage 1 - 3-5 year old players.
- + Top 3 themes: Ball mastery, turning and dribbling.

27 DOUBLE ATTACK

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 attacking and shooting unopposed.

28 COPS AND ROBBERS

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 attacking and beating an opponent.

29 BEES AROUND THE HONEY POT

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 attacking and beating an opponent.

30 KING OF THE RING - KNOCKOUT

- + Stages 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 3-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, ball mastery and 1v1 attacking and defending.

31 CAPTURE THE FLAG

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 attacking and passing.

32 INDIVIDUAL DRIBBLING CHALLENGES

- + Stage 1 - 3-5 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Ball mastery, turning and dribbling

33 AFRICAN SAFARI

- + Stage 1 - 3-5 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Ball mastery, turning and dribbling

34 SURF'S UP DUDE

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Ball mastery, take-on moves and dribbling

35 BRITISH BULL DOG

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 Attacking and Ball Mastery.

36 PIRATES SHIP

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Dribbling, ball mastery and changing direction.

37 3 GOALS BUILD UP

- + Stage 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Shooting at an unopposed goal, 1v1 attacking and dribbling.

38 1V1 DUEL

- + Stage 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Shooting at an unopposed/opposed goal, 1v1 attacking/defending and dribbling.

39 SUPER STRIKER

- + Stage 1, 2 & 3 - 3-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Shooting at an unopposed/opposed goal, 1v1 attacking/defending and dribbling.

40 1V1 TO TWO GOALS

- + Stages 1, 2 & 3 - 3-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, shooting at an unopposed goal and dribbling.

41 BATTLE OF THE KNIGHTS

- + Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, shooting technique and dribbling.

TAKE ON REPETITION

WHY USE IT

On occasion, the coach will want to create an activity to isolate a particular skill. This activity allows the Coach to easily evaluate the players and correct their technique.

SET UP

30x30 yards area, with 2x5 yards cone channels on each side. Groups line up at one end of the area. Opposite the group in the center is a cone. Approximately 25 yards away diagonally to the left and right are gates 2 yards apart. In each wide channel, place a cone approximately 5 yards from the end.

HOW TO PLAY

On the coach's command the players starting from the cones adjacent to the wide channel dribble at pace the full length of the area. When the players reach the end of the cones, they perform a tight turn and start down the wide channel. When they reach the blue cone they must perform a take-on move. Examples of take-on moves include scissors moves, cuts and feints. The player can continue and dribble back to the end of the line. The group in the center, dribble at pace towards the cone opposite. At the cone the player can perform a take-on move to either the left or right, accelerating through the cone gate. The player then dribbles around the outside of the area and returns to the line. After a couple of attempts send the next player in line when the player in front advances halfway up the center channel. Change lines every 2-3 attempts.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - To isolate the take-on moves and enable the coach to provide players with individual support.
- + Coaching tips - With the help of assistants, take players to one side and demonstrate and correct the moves. This 1 on 1 time is extremely important and is often overlooked by coaches.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Walk through with or without the ball and use assistants at the end of the area to give the players some extra help.
- + More challenging: Add a competition - first team back after completing the task successfully wins a point, or by challenging the player following behind to perform the activity and return before the teammate. In illustration 3, change the dribbling pattern to a zig zag.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, running with the ball and ball mastery.

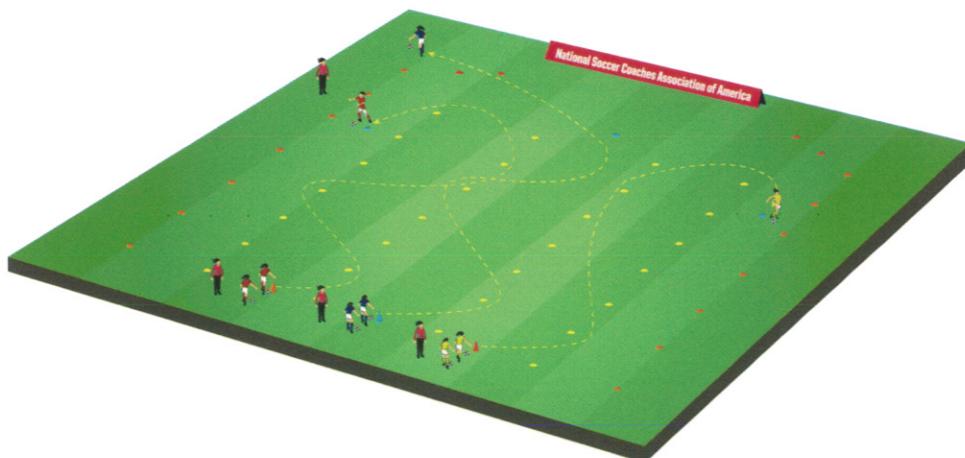
Top 3 competencies: Dribbling with the laces, take-on moves and changing the pace of the dribble.



- + Three small groups of players start at one end of the area.
- + On the coaches command the first player in each line dribbles at pace towards the other end of the area.
- + Players in the center line attack a cone approximately 25 yards away.



- + Players from wide positions must decelerate and perform a tight turn around the end cone.
- + In all 3 lines the players must perform a take on move to beat the blue cone (defender).
- + Wide players return down the channel and center player beats the 'defender' and goes through the red gate.



- + In this variation the players perform a zig zag move. The coach can number the cones along the channel and then call out a sequence.
- + Add a competition - a team race to catch your partner with 3 seconds in between each player.

FROGGER

WHY USE IT

Frogger is an activity suitable for players in the first 3 stages of development. The rules and objectives can be modified to emphasize dribbling and passing combinations.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x30 yards area - 5x2 yard squares created inside. The smaller squares are lilly pads - safety zones for the players (frogs). In each safety zone, place an attacking player with a ball and inside the larger square 4-5 more attacking players with balls. Finally, start with 1 or 2 defenders (snakes).

HOW TO PLAY

3-4 frogs start the activity dribbling inside the larger square. The 2 snakes are seeking to steal the ball and pass to the coach for a point. A player inside the area can dribble to a lilly pad and bump the waiting frog off. The frog dribbles into the main area and attempts to avoid the attention of the defenders. The coach can add rules such as, players must not return to the same lilly pad. This will require players to be more expansive dribblers. A progression can be to reduce the number of balls, removing them from the frogs on the lilly pads. Now, the players outside the safety zone with a ball must pass or otherwise exchange the ball with the player on the lilly pad. Once the ball is received players change positions. It is important that the first touch takes the player into space and not into danger.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - With fewer defenders than safety zones, the attackers must 'lift their head' to determine where the snakes are. Players should look to stay at the periphery to draw snakes from the center.
- + Coaching tips - The position the coach takes during an activity is extremely important. As a rule, the coach/s should move to the outside of the area to see the whole field and all the players. Standing inside the area reduces the available space and makes attacking more difficult.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start the activity without defenders to allow the attackers to get orientated. Add challenges gradually, 1 defender at a time.
- + More challenging: Progress to passing and add combination requirements such as a double pass.

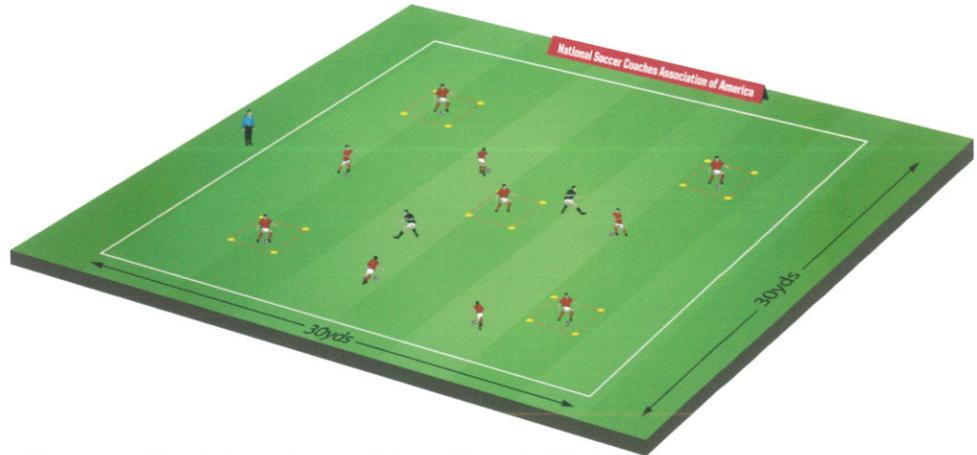
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1, 2 & 3 - 3-11 year old players

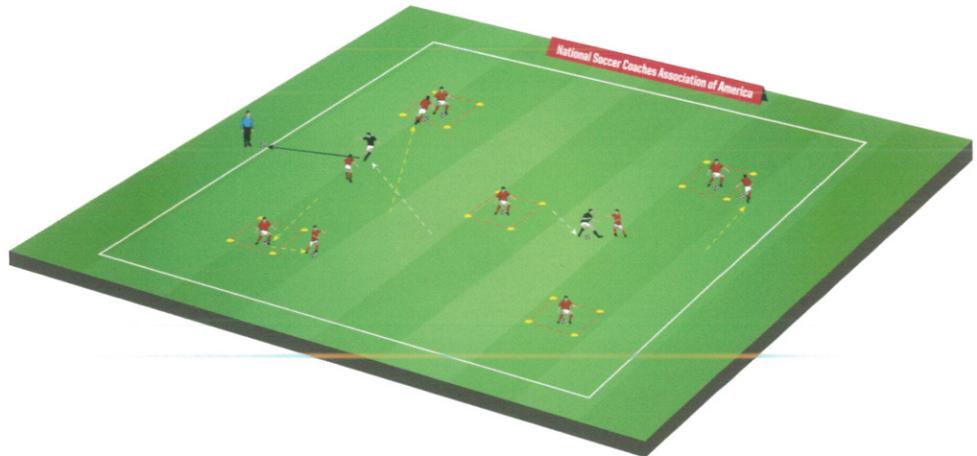
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, Attacking and defending 1v1 and ball mastery.

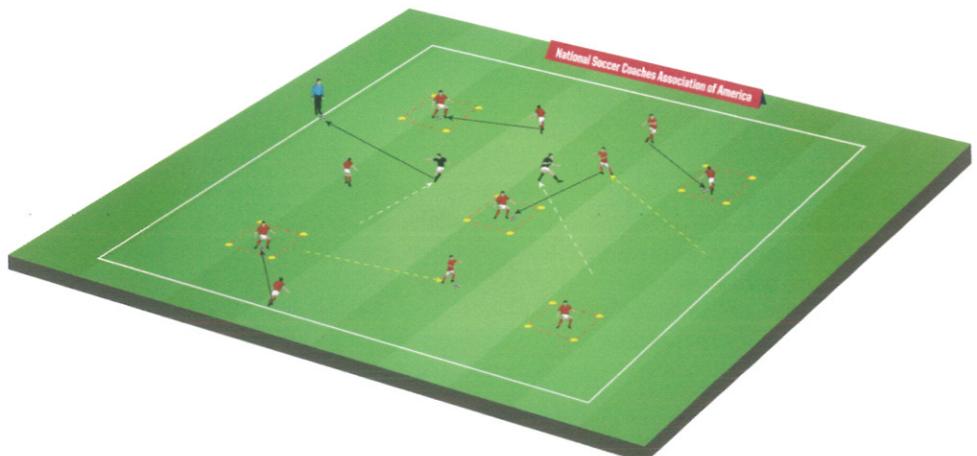
Top 3 competencies: Take-on moves, dribbling with the laces and passing over a short distance.



- + 5 frogs start with a ball standing on a 2x2 yard lilly pad. This is a safety zone.
- + 5 other attacking players start dribbling a ball in the larger area.
- + 1 or 2 defenders attempt to win the ball and pass to the coach.



- + A number of mini challenges occur simultaneously.
- + 2 frogs exchange unopposed with a player in the safety zone. The new player moves into a space.
- + A defender wins a 1v1 duel and passes to the coach on the sideline.



- + In this progression, only the players inside the larger area have balls.
- + The players exchange positions by making an accurate pass to the feet of a frog on the lilly pad.
- + The receiving player should view the position of the defenders and the first touch should be into space.

FORT KNOX

WHY USE IT

Players will have great fun playing this game opposing soldiers guarding the gold in Fort Knox and the bank robbers attempting to steal from the United States Bullion Depository.

SET UP

The set-up is a 20x20 yards area with small squares set up in two adjacent corners and a larger rectangle spread across the width of the area at the opposite end. The gold (a large supply of soccer balls) is placed in the two 'vaults' guarded by 3 soldiers. The remaining players are bank robbers, standing in the large rectangle and are numbered 1-2-3.

HOW TO PLAY

The objective for the bank robbers is to break into the vaults and to steal the gold. Once out of the vault, the bank robbers must bypass the soldiers and return to their hideout where they count their gold bullion. The soldiers must prevent the bank robbers from escaping with the treasure. Once a bank robber has left the vault, the soldier has to win the ball and dribble it back to the vault. The game commences with the coach shouting a number and all players with that number sprint to the vault. To successfully steal the bullion, the robber must dribble it all the way back and stop it inside the rectangle. The soldier cannot enter the rectangle. At the end of 2 minutes, count how many balls are in the robbers hideout, change the soldiers and play again.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – The robbers must use a variety of take-on moves to pass the soldiers. The soldiers should look to gain possession as close to the vault as possible and use poke and block tackling techniques to win the ball.
- + Coaching tips – Demonstrate for the players different take-on moves including cuts, feints and scissor moves. Also impress upon them the need to accelerate after the move to leave the defender behind.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Reduce the number of soldiers guarding the vault and make the 'hideout' area as wide as possible to provide more space for the robbers to exploit. The coach can also call 2+ Numbers.
- + More challenging: Create 1 vault only so the defenders are not spread out and reduce the size of the hideout so attacks are concentrated centrally. The coach can also add additional soldiers and/or reduce the number of robbers going at the same time.

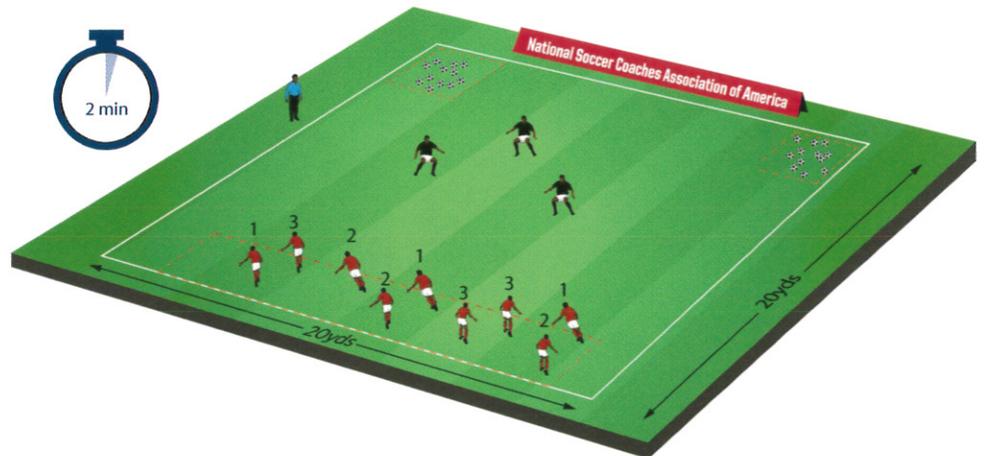
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

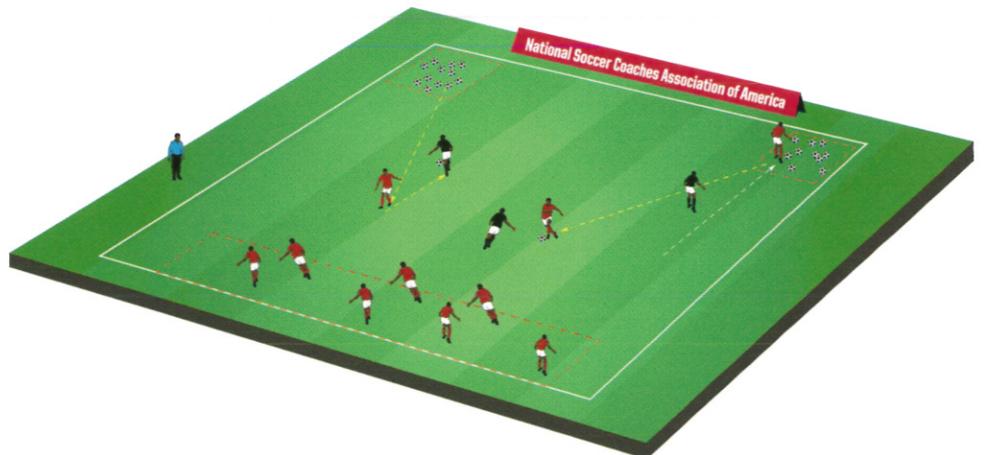
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, Attacking and defending 1v1 and ball mastery.

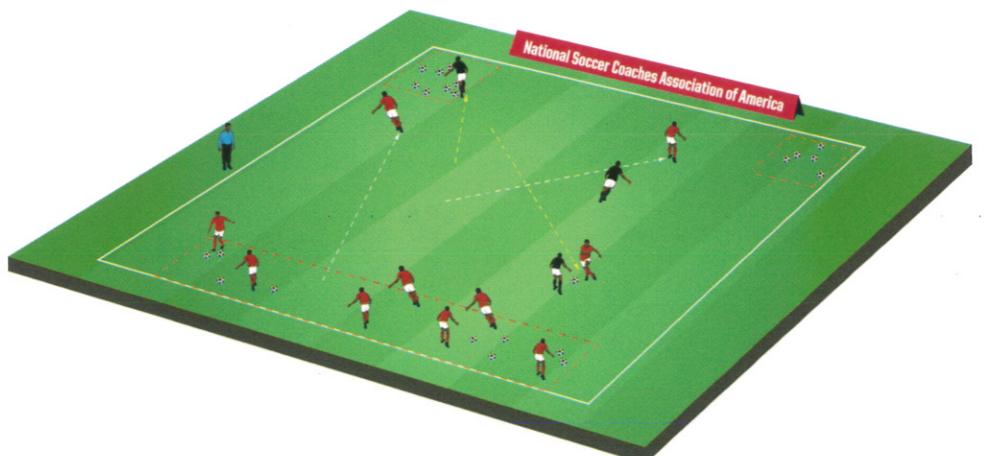
Top 3 competencies: Take-on moves, dribbling with the laces and defensive pressure.



- + The coach numbers the bank robbers 1-2-3 and they stand ready to raid the vault on the coach's command.
- + 3 soldiers guard the vault and must attempt to keep the gold in the Fort Knox depository.
- + The robbers have 2 minutes to steal as much goal as possible and take it to their hideout.



- + 2 red robbers have stolen gold bullion and are on their way back to the team's hideout.
- + The soldiers are waiting and one of the soldiers manages to stop the robber.
- + The soldier quickly dribbles the ball back to the vault.



- + The game continues and new numbers are called by the coach.
- + If the defenders are on top, the coach can call multiple numbers.
- + At the end of 2 minutes count-up the number of balls the bank robbers were able to steal and play again.

WHAT'S THE TIME MR WOLF?

WHY USE IT

This children's themed story involves Mr. Wolf waiting for little Pigs to leave their houses in search of food. They won't be able to get their dinner unless they can get past the Wolf without being caught.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area. Players with a ball start the activity from one end of the area. The coach or a player stands at the other end without a ball.

HOW TO PLAY

The Little Pigs stand at one end and at the other end is Mr. Wolf. The Little Pigs start the game by shouting in unison "WHAT'S THE TIME MR WOLF?" Mr. Wolf answers by shouting a time, such as "5 O'CLOCK". Mr. Wolf spins around to face the other direction away from the Little Pigs and counts loudly, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5". Simultaneously, the Little Pigs move forward taking 5 small touches of the ball. When the wolf has finished counting, he/she spins around quickly. If caught moving, the Little Pig must go back to the line. Players attempt to move forward without being seen by the wolf. The game is won by the pigs if one can move all the way forward to touch the wolf before he/she turns around. However, if the Wolf calls "DINNER TIME" the Little Pigs must dribble back to the starting line quickly as Mr. Wolf gives chase.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – The objective is to help players appreciate some fundamentals of dribbling and ball mastery. Soft touches with the laces, using the sole to slow and stop the ball and utilizing inside/outside of the foot to change direction are all areas of focus.
- + Coaching tips – Coaches working with players in the first stage of development must consider the cognitive development of 3-5 year old players in the training session. Modifying instructions by using themes and characters from children's stories helps the players enjoy the activity and learn soccer related rules.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Play the game to begin without the ball and use training vests in the back of the shorts as tails. The coach can also reduce the length of the area to increase the chance of reaching the Wolf.
- + More challenging: Add more wolves (defenders).

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stage 1 - 3-5 year old players.

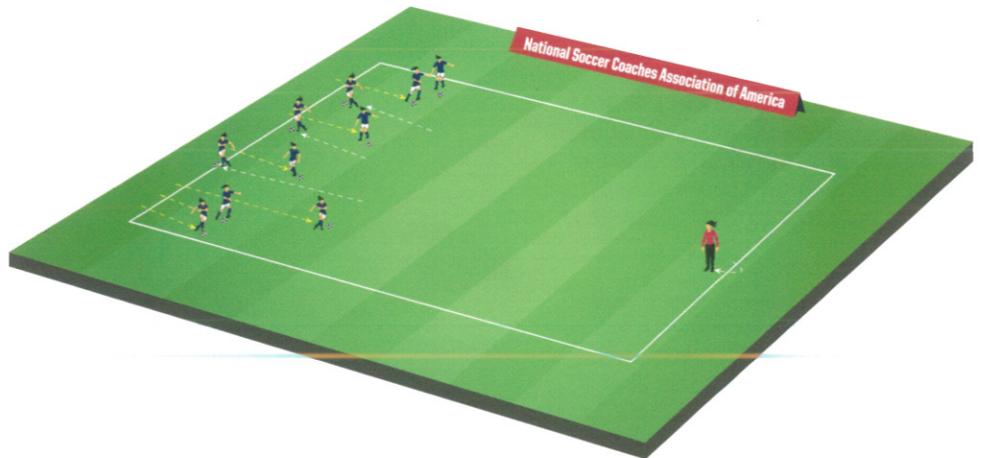
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Ball mastery, turning and dribbling.

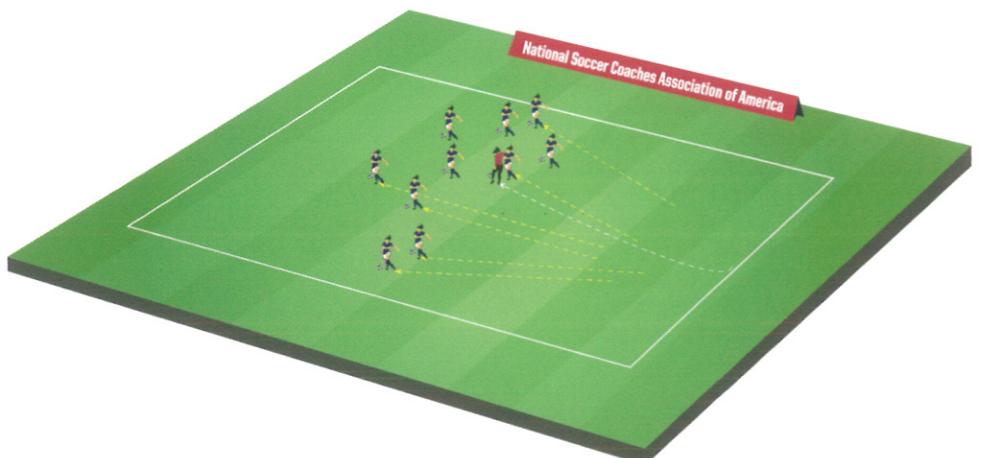
Top 3 competencies: Dribbling with the laces, changing direction and dribbling with stops and starts.



- + The players (pigs) line up at one end with a ball each.
- + The big bad wolf faces the pigs from the other end.
- + The players shout in unison "WHAT'S THE TIME MR WOLF?"



- + Mr. Wolf answers by shouting a time, such as "5 O'CLOCK".
- + Mr. Wolf spins around to face the other direction. Mr. Wolf counts loudly, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5".
- + Simultaneously, the Little Pigs move forward taking 5 small touches of the ball.



- + When the wolf has finished counting, he/she spins around quickly.
- + If caught moving, the Little Pig must go back to the line.
- + The game is won by the pigs if one can move all the way forward to touch the wolf before he/she turns.

STICKY DONUT

WHY USE IT

Sticky Donut is a classic playground activity that all the kids love to play. Depending on the age group and ability of the players, the coach can start with or without the ball.

SET UP

The set-up is a circle approximately 20 yards in diameter, with 12 cones evenly distributed around the circumference. A player with a ball stands at each cone on the inside of the circle. A cone is placed in the center of the area.

HOW TO PLAY

The activity starts with a player nominated by the coach dribbling a soccer ball around the edge of the area in either direction. All the other players must face inside the area and as the dribbler passes behind, he/she taps one player on the back and shouts "STICKY DONUT". The race is on, with the dribbling player moving in one direction and the 'sticky donut' player dribbling around the other way. The objective for both players is to maintain control of the ball and dribble as fast as possible to arrive back at the sticky donut's cone first. Whoever is last to the cone continues dribbling and repeats the sequence. At any point the coach can shout "DONUTS" and all the players dribble to the center, around the cone and back to their original starting position.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Impress upon the players that dribbling with the laces part of the shoe offers them the best opportunity to beat their opponent back to the cone. Use the inside of the foot to cut the ball back close to the circle if the ball is poorly controlled.
- + Coaching tips – In this type of activity where players are running in opposite directions, the coach must be concerned with safety. Instruct players waiting on the cones to stand inside the area until they have been selected and players on the outside must dribble with their head up to avoid a collision.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Play the game to begin without the ball. Make the circle smaller to reduce the amount of dribbling and send one player at a time.
- + More challenging: The coach can increase the size of the circle and send more than one dribbling player off at a time so there are multiple pairs competing.

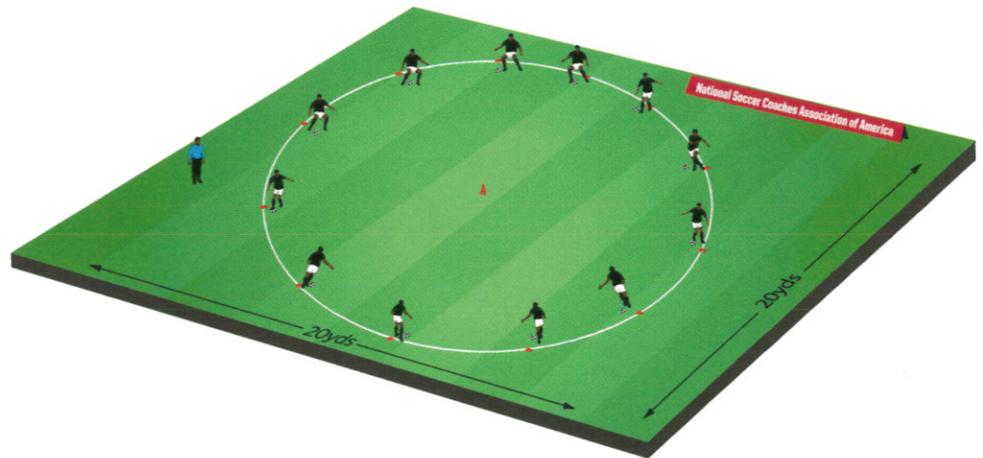
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stage 1 - 3-5 year old players.

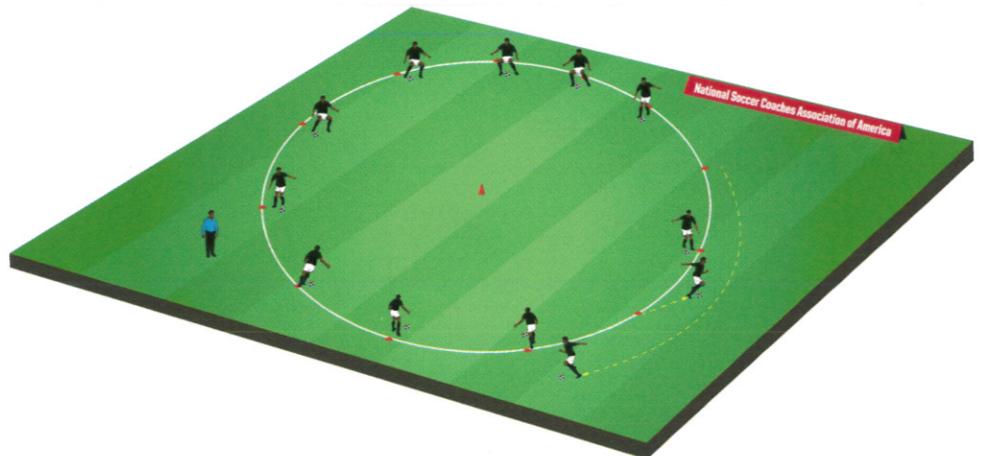
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Ball mastery, turning and dribbling.

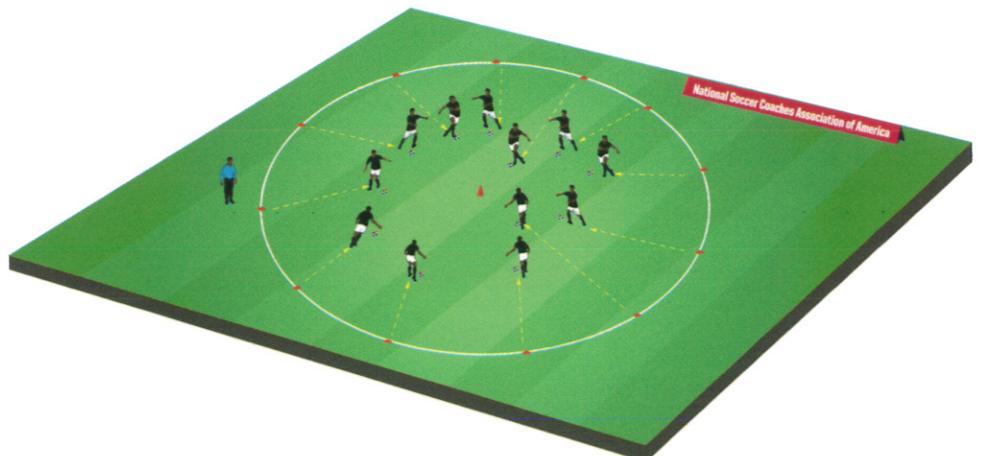
Top 3 competencies: Dribbling with the laces, changing direction and dribbling with stops and starts.



- + 12 players with a ball stand inside a circle next to their cone.
- + A cone is placed in the center of the circle.
- + For safety all players must remain inside the circle until it is their turn.



- + The coach nominates a player to dribble around the outside of the circle and passes as many players as he/she desires.
- + When ready, he/she taps a player on the back and shouts "STICKY DONUT" and the first player back wins.



- + The coach randomly shouts "DONUT".
- + All the players must dribble to the center, around the cone and back to their cone on the outside.
- + It's a race - who will be the first player back?

DOUBLE ATTACK

WHY USE IT

This activity provides players with many opportunities to perfect take-on moves selected by the coach. Attackers also have many shooting chances with and without a defender to beat.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area, with an appropriate sized goal placed along one of the short sides and one of the longer sides. 3-4 players line up behind a cone facing both goals. In the first sequence place 4 cones to create a 3 yards square in the center of the area. A good position for the coach is either between the goals or between the groups.

HOW TO PLAY

To begin the activity the first person from each line dribbles towards goal. When they reach the square, the players perform a take-on move prescribed by the coach. Once the players have passed through the square they must take a shot with the next touch. For safety, after shooting, players must collect the ball and return around the edge of the area. As the players become more proficient the coach can add a defender and remove the cones. A second defender can be added so both lines face a similar challenge. Equally, the coach could add a cone 1 yard inside each post to provide a shooting target – 2 points for scoring between the post and cone and 1 point between the cones.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the attackers to perform a take on move and then in a fluent movement take a shot at goal. The coach can introduce a number of different feints, cuts and ball mastery skills before shooting.
- + Coaching tips – The coach can add incremental challenge by using the equipment creatively. For example, adding cones along the goal line to create scoring targets requires the player to be more precise to score a higher points total.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Do not progress to adding a defender or a goalkeeper. The coach can also choose a simple take-on move, such as an inside of the foot cut.
- + More challenging: add defenders and goalkeepers. Also, the coach can specify a more difficult take-on move such as a scissors move and/or add cones along the goal line to create different scoring targets.

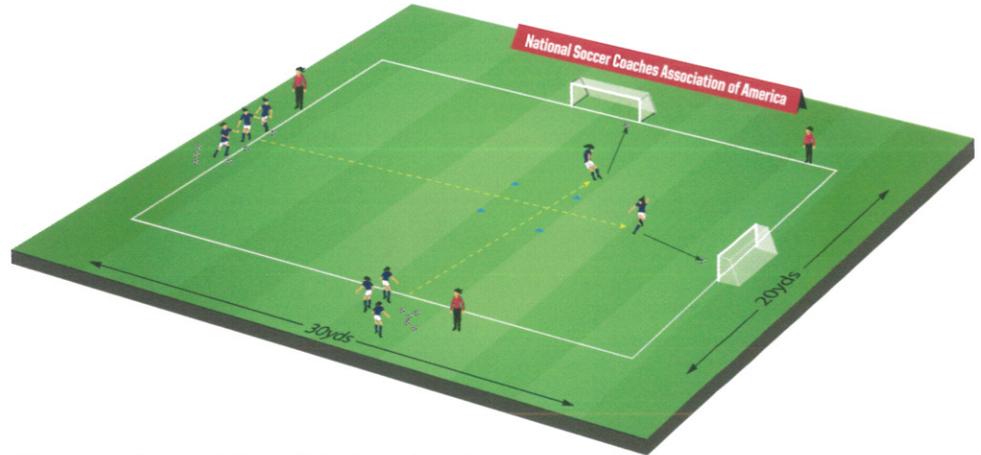
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

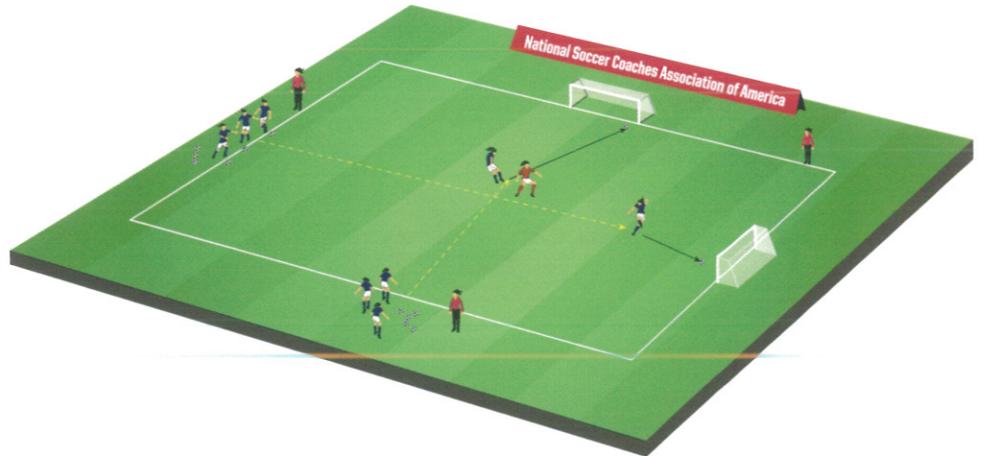
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 attacking and shooting unopposed.

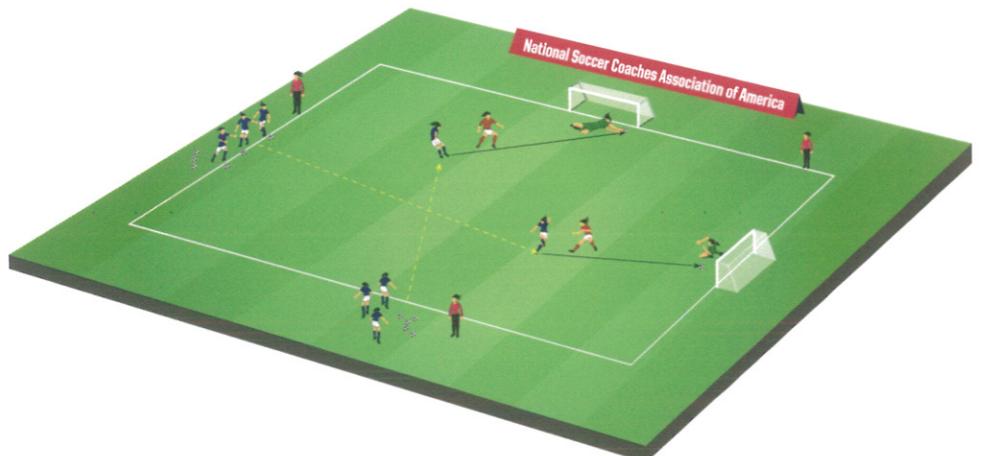
Top 3 competencies: Take-on moves to beat an opponent, dribbling with the laces and shooting.



- + First person from each line dribbles towards goal.
- + When reaching the square, they perform a take-on move and shoot.
- + As soon as the player has cleared the area, the coach sends the next player.



- + Add a defender for additional challenge.
- + The defender must decide which attacker to defend.
- + A second defender can be added so both lines face a similar challenge.



- + Goalkeepers can be added to create another layer of challenge for the attackers.
- + After the attacker has beaten the defender with a take-on move, the attacker must attempt to shoot at goal past the goalkeeper.

COPS AND ROBBERS

WHY USE IT

The young players thoroughly enjoy this 'tag' type game. 6-8 'robbers' have stolen treasure and 3 'Cops' are in hot pursuit in an effort to place the robbers in jail.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area, with a 5x5 yard square marked out in the center. 6-8 players dribble the ball inside the larger square and 3 players without a ball stand on the sideline waiting to be called on by the coach.

HOW TO PLAY

The robbers must dribble around the area trying to prevent capture by the cops. On the command of "GO", the cops rush into the area and attempt to touch the robbers ball with their foot. The robbers use a variety of escape moves to elude the cops, such as a drag back, step over and shielding the ball. The robbers should also try to dribble into space and away from the pressure created by other teammates and the cops. If a cop touches a robber's ball, the robber must go to jail with his/her ball. The jail is the center square and once in jail the robber can shout "SAVE ME". The other robbers can visit the jail and release their accomplice with a high-five. Once all the robbers have been captured the game is over and the coach selects 3 new cops. The coach can add competition by timing how quickly the cops manage to capture all the robbers.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Working with the robbers, encourage them to raise their heads and look for space away from other cops and robbers. Robbers should try to work to the perimeter in an effort to keep as much of the playing area in front of them so they can see all the action. The coach can work with the cops to close down space quickly, get into a low and balanced defensive position and make angled runs to force robbers into a corner.
- + Coaching tips – Positioning the jail in the center of the square requires the players to be aware of 360 degree movement and this will require players to constantly look around them and sense pressure. This is a skill that the players will need in a game.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: The coach could place the jail in a corner to make pressure from the cops more predictable.
- + More challenging: Add more cops, reduce the size of the area and place a time limit on the cops.

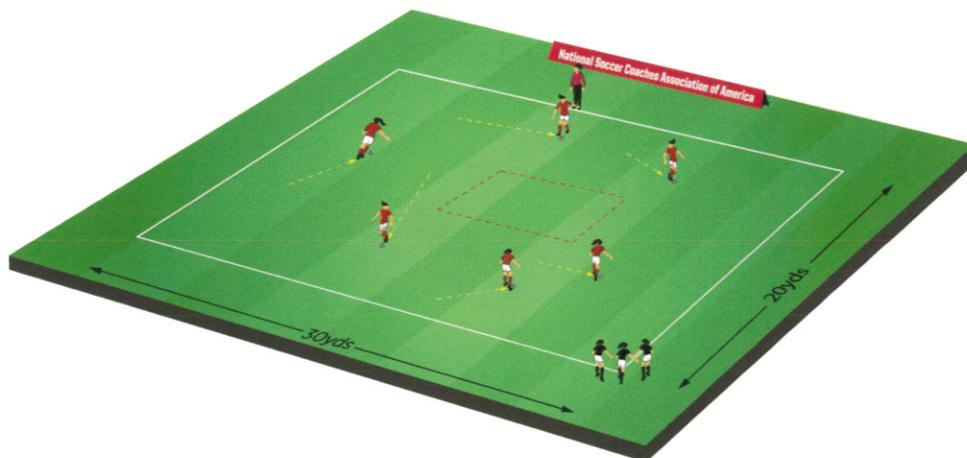
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

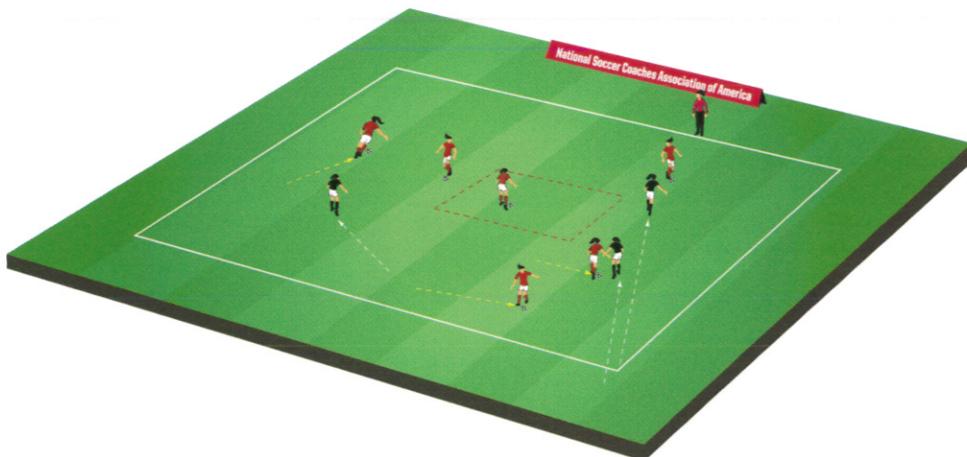
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 attacking and beating an opponent.

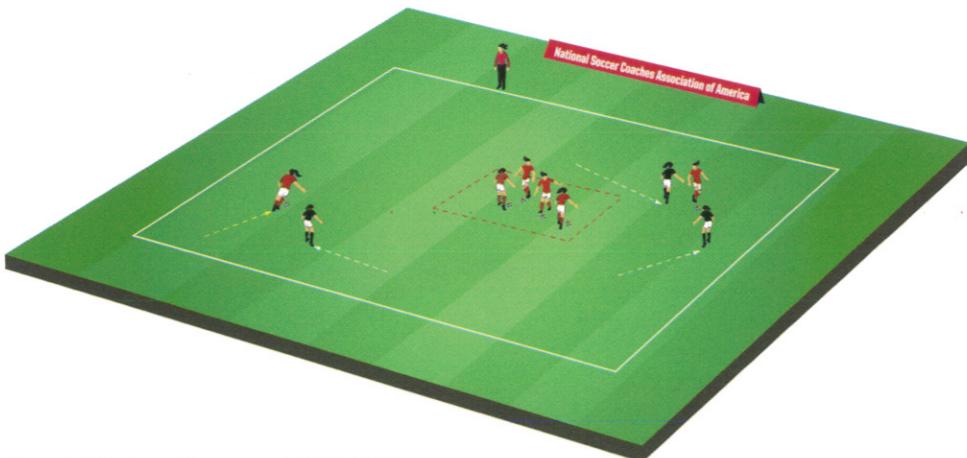
Top 3 competencies: Take-on and escape moves, laces dribbling and defending pressure.



- + The red players are the robbers attempting to evade capture by the cops.
- + The robbers must dribble around the area looking to move into space and away from the cops.
- + The cops are on the sideline getting ready to be called on by the coach.



- + The coach releases the cops, who start chasing the red robbers.
- + The cops must try and touch the robber's ball with their feet.
- + If a red's ball is touched, the robber must take their ball and go to the jail in the center of the area.



- + Once in jail the robber can yell "SAVE ME".
- + The robbers still evading capture can visit the jail with their ball and release their teammate with a high five.
- + Once all the robbers have been caught and sent to jail, the coach selects 3 new cops and starts a new game.

BEES AROUND THE HONEY POT

WHY USE IT

Bees Around the Honey Pot provides players with a fun and challenging 1v1 environment to practice individual defending, take-on and escape moves.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x30 yards area, with five - 2 yard diameter circles positioned in the center of the area. 2 teams of 5 Bumble Bees start from their 'home' box adjacent to the playing area. Each Bee has a ball and a training vest tucked in the back of their shorts to represent their 'stinger'. A player from each team starts in the middle of the area as a 'Hummingbird Defender'. The coach stands on the sideline to observe and is assisted by 2 parents/coaches responsible for helping the players.

HOW TO PLAY

On the command of 'GO' a Bee from each team dribbles a ball and attempts to deposit honey into one of the 5 honey pots. Each team can only have 1 ball in each pot and the first team to deposit a ball in every pot wins the game. The coach can play the first game without the defender so the players can get accustomed to the area and the rules. The first player dribbles and drops off the ball before sprinting back and giving a high five to the next player. Each team can nominate 1 player to be the hungry Hummingbird looking for a delicious juicy Bee for supper. If the Hummingbird is able to pull the stinger from the Bee's shorts, the Bee must return with the ball and stinger and the next player goes. The first team with a ball in each pot wins!

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - This activity provides ample individual attacking and defending repetition. Time is not a friend to the attacking team so defenders should be encouraged to be patient and delay.
- + Coaching tips - With young players in particular there tends to be 1 or 2 children who quickly understand the activity before others. The coach can use a 'teaching moment' to praise the player and also get him/her to demonstrate what they are doing to be successful.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start the activity without the defender. Reduce the number of honey pots to 1 to minimize the number of decisions for the young players. Send more than 1 Bee at a time.
- + More challenging: The coach can nominate 2 defenders for each team and move the honey pots closer together to make it easier for the defenders to cover ground.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 attacking and beating an opponent.

Top 3 competencies: Take-on and escape moves, laces dribbling and defending pressure.



- + 5 yellow Bees and 5 red Bees are waiting with their ball to penetrate into the area on the dribble.
- + Each team has selected a 'Hummingbird Defender' to stop the Bees from depositing honey into 5 honey pots.
- + An assistant coach presides over each team to ensure they understand the game conditions.



- + A yellow and red Bee have managed to allude the Hummingbird and deposited honey into a pot.
- + A second red Bee has used a terrific take-on move, such as a scissors or feint, to beat the defender.
- + A yellow Bee is more cautious and the red defender does well to close space and apply pressure.



- + In the final diagram, the game has progressed with the coach selecting 2 defenders and 2 attackers at once.
- + Now there is a great deal of action as several 1v1 duels occur simultaneously and Bees return 'home'.
- + The Bees must attack at pace and the Hummingbirds must attempt to slow down the attack.

KING OF THE RING - KNOCKOUT

WHY USE IT

This is a classic warm-up activity with players of all ages and ability levels. The coach can add conditions to increase the level of challenge and establish two playing areas to ensure no players are eliminated from the activity.

SET UP

Two 10x10 yards areas adjacent to each other. All players with a ball dribble inside one area. A narrow safety zone is created between the playing areas.

HOW TO PLAY

In the first variation of this activity, the players attempt to kick out the opponent's ball whilst maintaining possession of their ball inside the area. This is a good opportunity to demonstrate the poke tackle technique used when the attacker is in front. This is a high intensity activity if played correctly, with players using different escape moves to elude their opponents. If a player's ball is kicked out they must chase after and take it to the adjacent square. Once 2 or more players arrive, start a new game. Each time a player gets 'knocked out', they move to the other area. Play for 3-5 minutes and the player with the least number of points (fewest times knocked out) is the winner.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - The coach should show players how to move the ball away from pressure and into space using different escape moves such as a step-over, step on turn and Cruyff turn. Also encourage players to constantly look over their shoulder to sense the pressure.
- + Coaching tips - Developing a repertoire of several take-on moves is important at a young age. Once the players know the moves, the coach should concentrate on the correct execution. For example, if pressure comes from an attacker's left side, an outside of the right foot cut will establish greater separation and maintain a physical barrier from the defender.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Instead of all against all add a couple of defenders in each area so the attackers only need to worry about keeping possession and not kicking out other players balls.
- + More challenging: Add conditions such as left foot only dribble, instead of kicking out the ball a player is knocked out for a nutmeg and make the activity a team challenge - 2 teams play against each other.

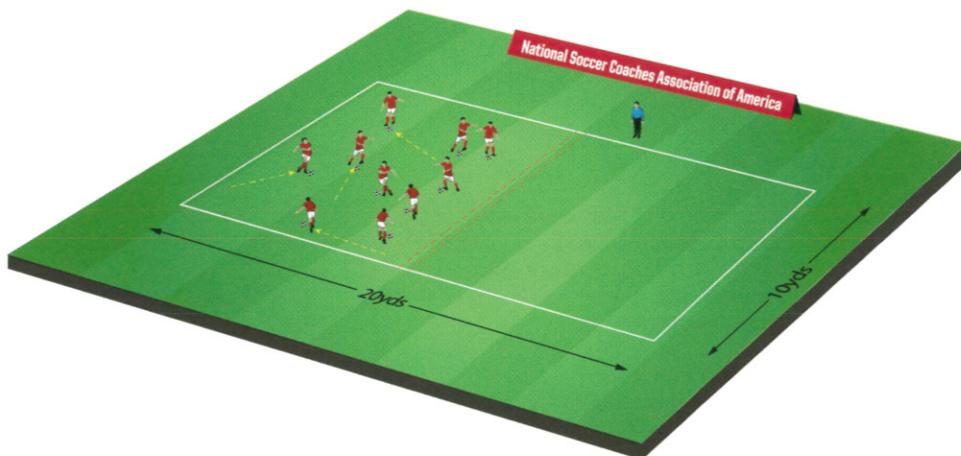
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 3-18 year old players

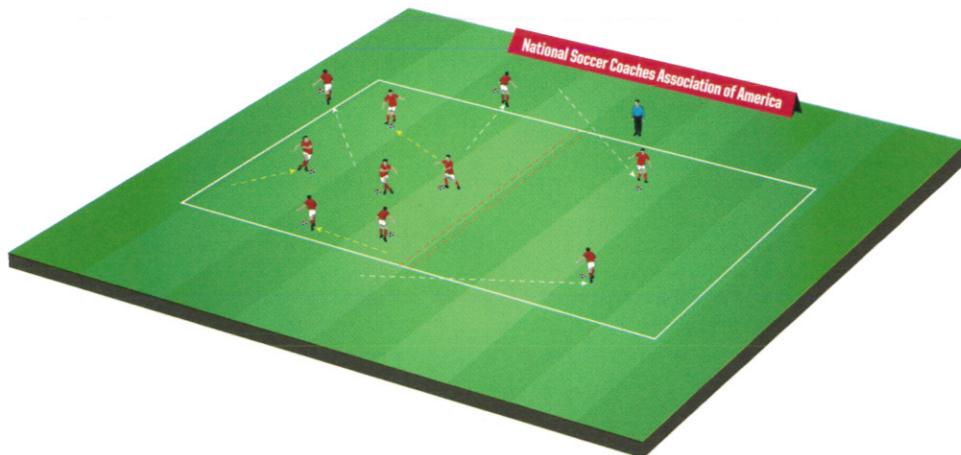
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, ball mastery and 1v1 attacking and defending.

Top 3 competencies: Escape moves, poke tackle technique and creating space as an individual.



- + All the players start by dribbling around in a 10x10 yards square.
- + Adjacent to the square is another 10x10 yards area with a narrow safety zone separating the areas.
- + On the coach's command of "KNOCKOUT" all players attempt to kick the opponents balls out of the area.



- + If a player's ball leaves the area, they must retrieve the ball and then enter the adjacent square.
- + Each time a player gets knocked out of the area, the player earns a point.
- + The games should last 3-5 minutes and the winner is the player with the least number of points.



- + In this illustration, many of the players have transferred to the adjacent square and have started a new game.
- + The coach can add a number of conditions to make the activity more challenging for older players.
- + A player retrieving a ball before it stops moving can re-enter the same square without losing a point.

CAPTURE THE FLAG

WHY USE IT

The players will have great fun attacking and defending as they attempt to capture and protect the flag. For younger players keep the activity 1v1, but for more proficient players in the 2nd Stage of Development the Coach can progress to 2v1 with passing combinations.

SET UP

The set-up is a 30x30 yards area with 4 small squares positioned in each corner. In the middle is a 12x12 yards square with a corner flag in the center and four 2 yards wide entry gates in the corners. 3 defenders start in the central square and 3 teams of 3 players with a ball each occupy the corners. Assistant coaches help each team.

HOW TO PLAY

On the command of 'GO' the first person in each team dribbles towards the center and must attempt to break into the square through one of the 4 gates. The objective for the 3 attacking teams is to dribble their ball to the center and touch the flag stick. If a defender touches the ball the attacker must dribble back to their home box and tag a teammate, who immediately enters the area. Play until one team 'captures the flag' and then play again with a different defending team. To add another layer of competition, time each game and the defenders managing to protect the longest wins.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – The attacking players should dribble at pace and try to penetrate through the gate before the defender can get into position. The defenders should remain compact around the flag and communicate which player they are going to play against 1v1.
- + Coaching tips – Positioning a flag in the center of the area clearly identifies for players where the main action will occur. This focus helps the coach to teach players the principles of play, such as compactness in defense and penetration in attack.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Make the center square larger so the defenders have a greater area to cover and the coach could also allow defenders to roam freely. Will the defenders be tempted to leave a compact shape?
- + More challenging: Send 2 attackers with every sequence and insist that to enter the area a pass must be made into the square as the teammate arrives.

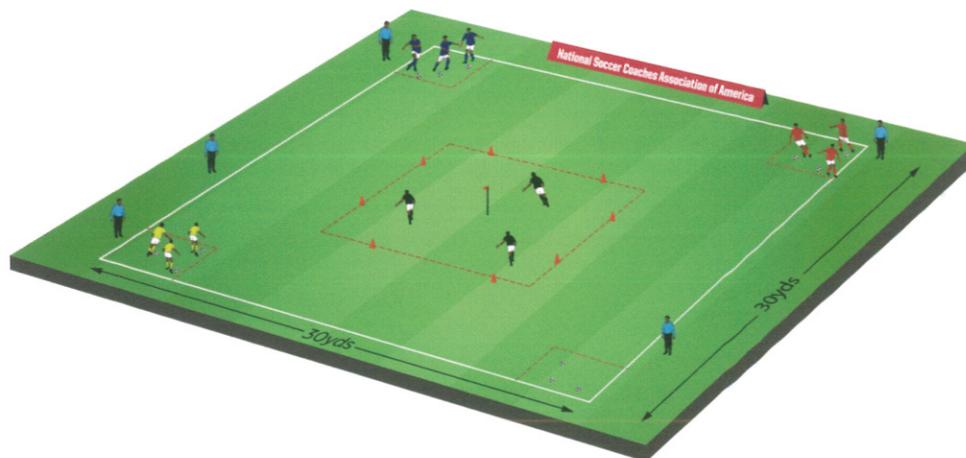
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

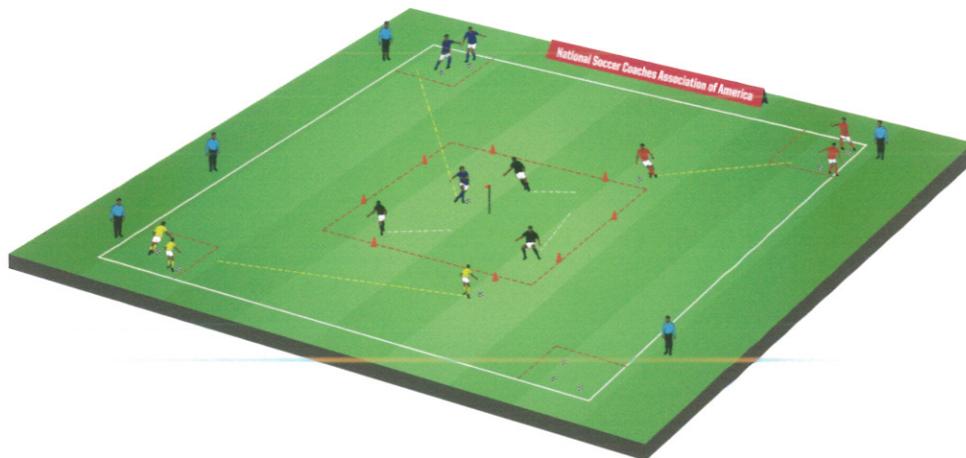
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 attacking and passing.

Top 3 competencies: Take-on and escape moves, laces dribbling and defending pressure.



- + 3 black defenders start the activity protecting the flag in the center of a 12x12 yards square.
- + 3 other teams commence the activity from 'home bases' in the corners of the large area.
- + Each team has an assistant coach to provide help with rules and player understanding.



- + The first player from each of the attacking teams dribble from the home base and attempt to penetrate.
- + The blue attacker dribbles at pace and enters through the gate before the defender can shift across.
- + The red and yellow attackers are more cautious and this allows defenders to prepare for a duel.



- + In the final diagram, the game has progressed with the coach sending 2 attackers with 1 ball from each team.
- + The cones around the central square have been removed and a pass requirement has been added.
- + The red and blue teams both achieve a pass into the center for a teammate to run onto and capture the flag.

SURF'S UP DUDE

WHY USE IT

Surf's Up Dude is a 'tag' game with 'surfers' attempting to catch a 'wave' to transport them from one island to another. Between the islands are hungry 'Sharks' waiting to catch a slow surfer.

SET UP

The set-up is a 25x15 yards area with 10-12 players with balls starting at one end. A coach or player starts in the center of the area.

HOW TO PLAY

The surfers must use their boards (ball) to travel across the ocean lying between 2 islands, avoiding the sharks. The game commences with players lying prone with their chest on their soccer ball. The surfers move side to side to replicate the sway of the ocean as they prepare to catch the ultimate wave. Seeing the wave coming behind them, the coach shouts "SURF-UP" and all the surfers jump to their feet and place one foot on top of the ball. When all surfers are standing on their boards, they shout in unison "SURF'S UP DUDE" and then start to dribble forward. As the surfers approach the Sharks they must use take-on moves to pass the Sharks and dribble at pace to the other Island. If the shark touches a ball the surfer becomes a shark. Play until there is one surfer remaining.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Teach players different take-on moves to beat an opponent, such as feints, cuts and scissor moves.
- + Coaching tips - As young players start to learn different take-on moves, it is reasonable to expect the move to be slow and methodical. As basic movement patterns are achieved, it is important for the coach to encourage players to accelerate away from the defender. The take-on move will have little effect if the attacker does not move away at pace.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Keep the number of Sharks to 1-2 and give the Surfers a set number of 'lives'.
- + More challenging: Add more Sharks and narrow the width of the area.

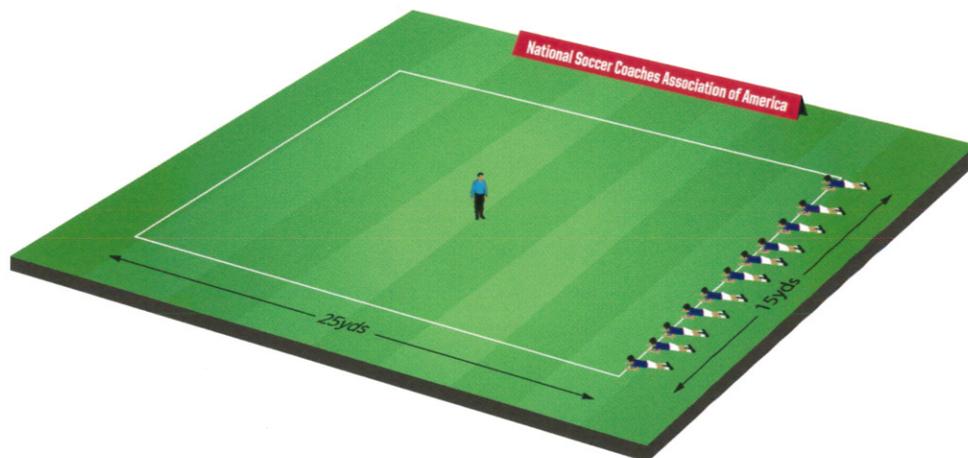
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

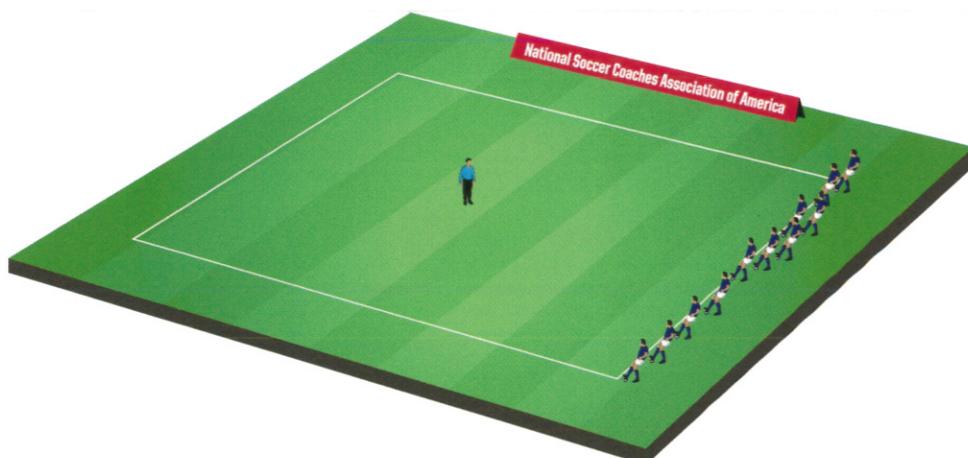
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Ball mastery, take-on moves and dribbling

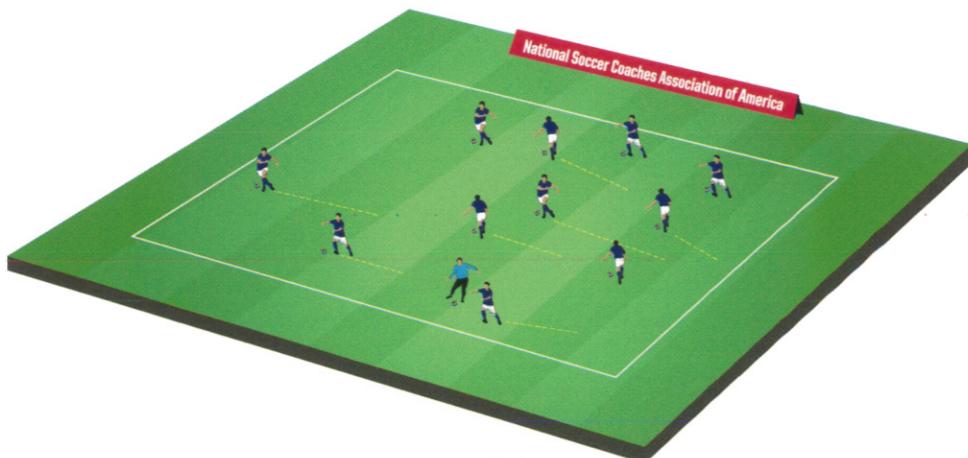
Top 3 competencies: Laces dribbling, changing direction and using different surfaces of the feet.



- + The 'Coach Shark' waits in the ocean ready to pick off surfers as they travel from one end to the other.
- + The surfers start by lying on their surf boards (soccer ball), swaying side to side with the waves.
- + The surfers are waiting for the 'ultimate wave' to carry them from one island to another.



- + The coach sees the ultimate wave coming quickly behind the surfers and shouts "SURFS UP".
- + The surfers spring to their feet and place a foot on top of the ball - rolling it side to side.
- + The players shout in unison "SURFS UP DUDE" in their best Californian Surfers accent.



- + The surfers dribble past the Shark using a variety of take-on moves.
- + If the shark touches a surfers ball, the surfer becomes a shark.
- + The last surfer standing is the winner.

BRITISH BULL DOG

WHY USE IT

This is another activity creating a significant number of 1v1 attacking and defending opportunities. Attacking players can use a full repertoire of take-on moves and defenders can start to learn body position and movement when applying defensive pressure.

SET UP

30x20 yards area. 10-12 players stand at one end of the area with a ball and 1 player/coach starts in the center.

HOW TO PLAY

The cats (with a ball) must travel from one end of the alley to the other without getting caught by the Bull Dog. To begin, either the coach or a player start as the Bull Dog in the middle of the playing area. The other players (the cats), line up at one end. The Bull Dog starts the game by chanting "British Bull Dog" and the cats respond in unison, calling "British Bull Dog 1-2-3". The cats must try to make their way to the opposite end of the area, dribbling the ball, without their ball being touched by the bulldog. Any cat that has its ball touched by a Bull Dog or who dribbles outside the area becomes a Bull Dog. The remaining cats then line up at the other end of the area and repeat the game, trying to get past all of the bulldogs. The game continues until there is only one cat left. That player then gets to be bulldog for the next round.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Emphasize ways to beat an opponent by accelerating and using take-on moves (moves/feints and cuts).
- + Coaching tips - With young players in particular, it is important to use stories and themes they can relate to. In this case, players are more likely to respond to 'Cats' and 'Bull Dogs' than a less interesting discussion of the rules.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: If the Cats are finding it difficult to pass the Bull Dog, the coach can make the area wide and/or can make the Bull Dog dribble a ball whilst catching the Cats. The game can also commence without a ball to allow the players to become familiar with the rules.
- + More challenging: Change the way the cats move along the playing area - ask them to gallop, skip, walk or slide. Add more Bull Dogs to start the game and add 2-3 channels and allocate different point scores.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

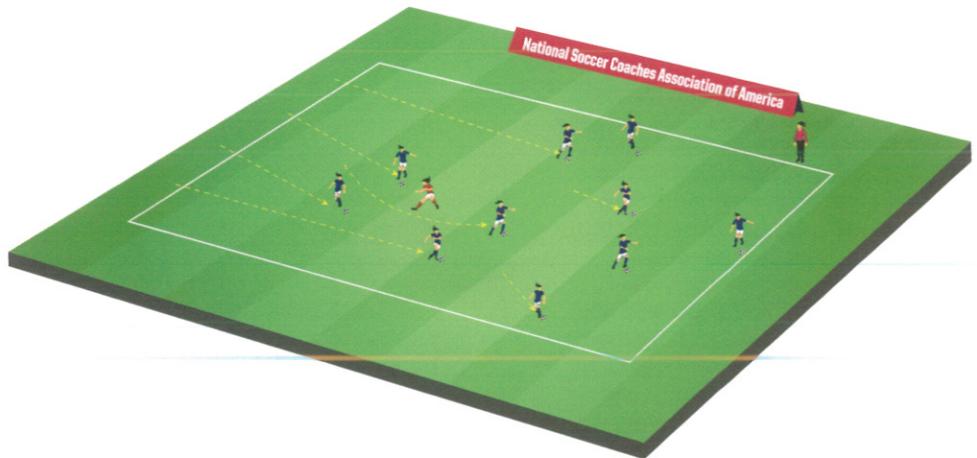
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, 1v1 Attacking and Ball Mastery.

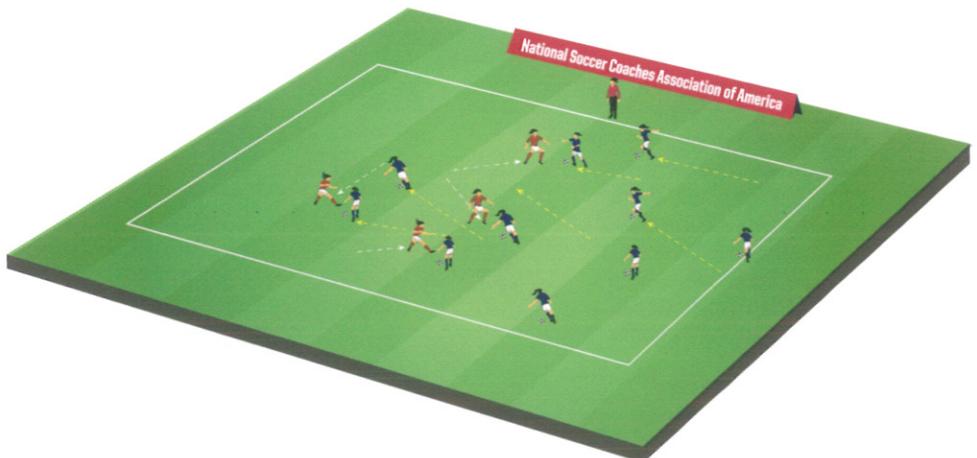
Top 3 competencies: Dribbling with the laces, take-on moves and defending pressure.



- + The game commences with all the Cats (in blue) standing at one end of the area with a ball each.
- + In the center of the area is the Bull Dog trying to prevent the Cats reaching the other end of the alley.
- + To start the game, the Bull Dog shouts "BRITISH BULL DOG" and the Cats reply "BRITISH BULL DOG 1-2-3".



- + All the Cats leave at the same time and attempt to go past the Bull Dog.
- + If the Bull Dog touches the Cat's ball or if the Cat dribbles outside of the area, the Cat becomes a Bull Dog.
- + Encourage players to 'raise their head' so they can recognize where the space is on the field.



- + In this illustration, there are several Bull Dogs in the center.
- + The Cats must be crafty, waiting for other Cats to engage the Bull Dog.
- + As soon as a space opens, the Cat should accelerate and dribble through to the other end of the alley.

PIRATES SHIP

WHY USE IT

Using the equipment to make the shape of a pirate's ship, the coach assumes the role of the ship's captain and barks out orders to the ship's mates. A fun activity with plenty of touches and contact with the ball.

SET UP

20x10 yards area shaped like a boat. Each side of the ship has a name - Bow (front), Stern (back), Starboard (right) and Port (left) and at the back is the ship's flag (skull and crossbones). Each shipmate has a ball.

HOW TO PLAY

The Captain of the ship starts the activity by getting the shipmates familiar with the ship. The 'deck' is the area inside the cones and the shipmates can move anywhere on the deck to begin the activity. If the shipmate goes over the edge of the ship, they go into the ocean and risk being eaten by sharks. Next introduce the sides of the ship - when the Captain shouts out either "BOW", "STERN", "STARBOARD" or "PORT", the players dribble their ball to that side. Introduce other movements and commands: Captain walks onto the ship and the first mate shouts "CAPTAIN'S ON DECK" and all players stop, place their foot on the ball and shout "AYE-AYE-CAPTAIN". Captain shouts "SCRUB THE DECK" and players perform foundations (side to side touches). Captain shouts "UP THE RIGGING" and players perform toe taps and use their arms to climb the imaginary rigging. Captain shouts "CANNONBALL" and players dive onto the deck to avoid the imaginary cannonball. Add other movements and commands.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Players should dribble with the laces and perform an escape move.
- + Coaching tips - In creating the shape of the ship, the coach creates different challenges for the players dribbling the ball. The bow is narrow and all the players will converge, so close control is needed. Equally, the distance between port and starboard is far less at the bow than stern, so for speed, players will go to the bow.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start off the activity without the ball so the players become familiar with the rules and instructions.
- + More challenging: A smaller ship.

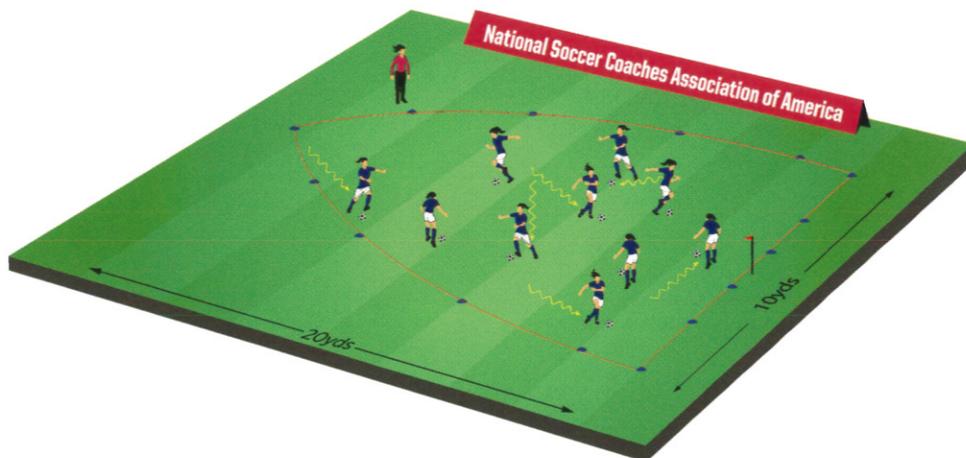
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

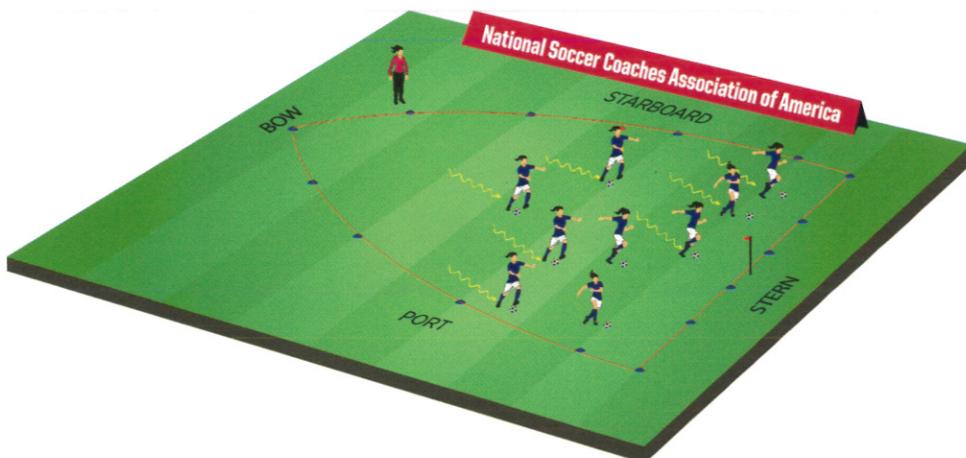
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Dribbling, ball mastery and changing direction.

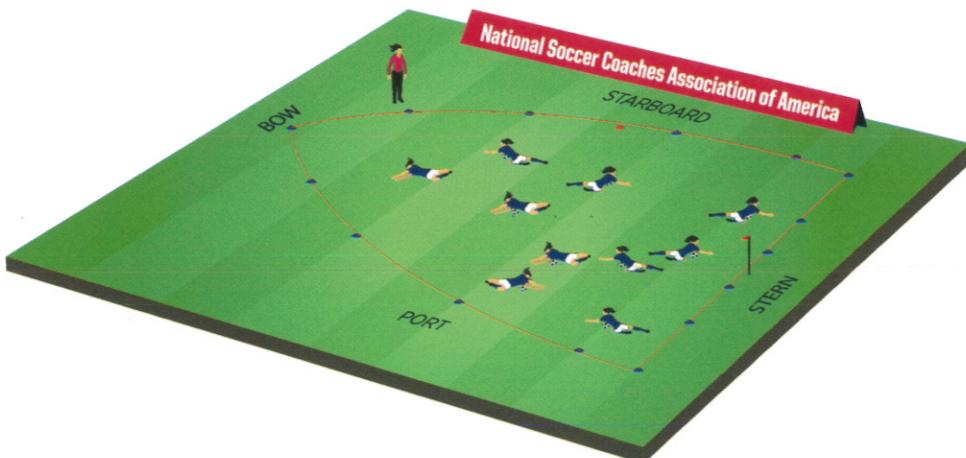
Top 3 competencies: Dribbling with the laces, take on moves and escape moves.



- + The coach (Captain) puts the players (Shipmates) through a number of training tasks before setting sail.
- + To start, the Captain helps the Shipmates become familiar with the ship.
- + Shipmates move around the deck and on the Captain's command to the Bow, Stern, Port and Starboard.



- + The Captain shouts "STERN" and the players dribble as fast as they can to the back of the boat.
- + If the Captain shouts "BOW" the players must have tight control as they all try to get to the point of the the boat without falling over the edge into the shark infested ocean.



- + The Captain can select a First-mate. When the Captain walks onto the ship, the first mate shouts "CAPTAIN'S ON DECK" and all the shipmates shout "AYE AYE CAPTAIN".
- + The Captain has shouted "CANNONBALL" and all the players must dive on the deck for safety.

3 GOALS BUILD UP

WHY USE IT

This activity provides players with plenty of shooting and 1v1 attacking and defending opportunities. The challenge on both sides of the ball can be modified quite quickly for more proficient players.

SET UP

The set-up is a circle with a 15 yards diameter. Set up 3 small sided goals or flags 2 yards apart on the perimeter of the area. Cones or flat markers are used to create 3 equally sized zones inside the circle. There are 3 teams standing adjacent to each of the goals and each team has 3-4 players. The players are numbered and with players in the first stage of development it will be beneficial to have an assistant for each team.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach calls a number and a player from each team dribbles a ball from the goal and attempts to score in the goal of either of the opposing teams. Before shooting, the player must leave the area immediately adjacent to his/her goal. In the first sequence there are no defenders or goalkeepers. In the second sequence, the coach adds a goalkeeper who remains in goal for 3-5 repetitions. The goalkeeper plays a short pass to the teammate, who attacks either of the opponent's goals. The attacker must enter the opponent's zone quickly before shooting. The goalkeeper must stay on the goal line to allow the attacker opportunity to shoot. In the final progression, a third player has been added as a defender. Keep the goalkeeper and defender constant for 3-5 attempts and then change positions. Too many changes with young players will lead to uncertainty who is the goalkeeper, defender and attacker.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Firstly establish the player's confidence in front of goal by adding the degree of challenge gradually. By adding a competitive objective, such as 'first team to score', the coach creates a level of realism to the activity.
- + Coaching tips - Two of the most important variables a coach can manipulate at Stage 1 are the size of the area - more space equals more time - and number of players - fewer players equals more involvement and less challenge.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

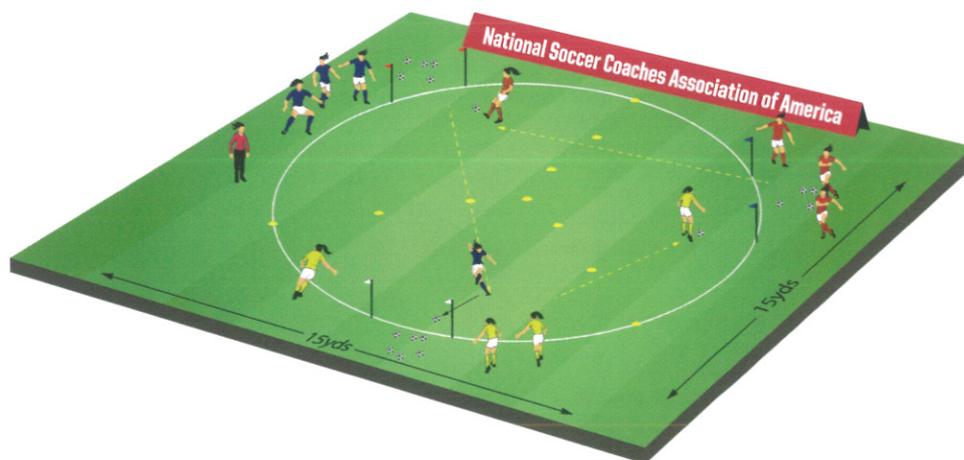
- + Less challenging: Start with an attacker only dribbling at an unopposed goal.
- + More challenging: Add a goalkeeper and a defender, increase the size of the area, specify which goal each team attacks and stipulate the type of take on move.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

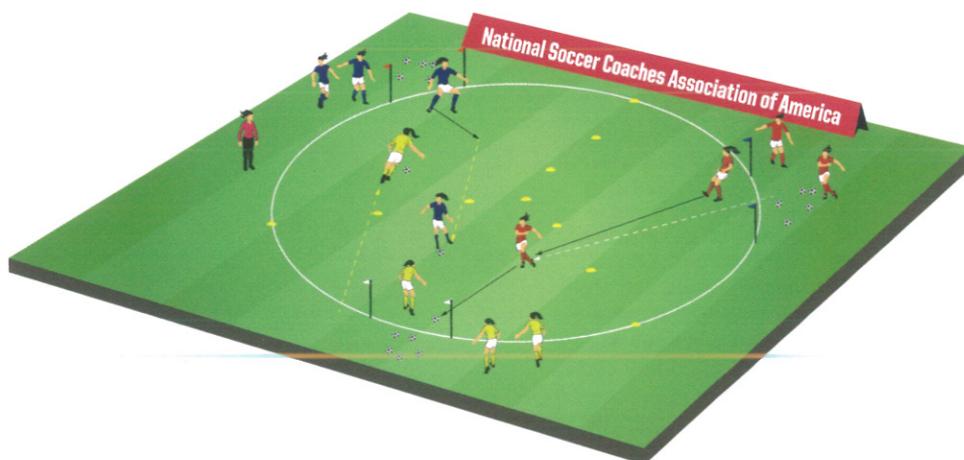
Stage 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Shooting at an unopposed goal, 1v1 attacking and dribbling.
Top 3 competencies: Dribbling take on moves, defensive pressure and shooting.



- + The coach calls a number and a player from the red, yellow and blue teams dribbles a ball.
- + Players attempt to score in the goal of the opposing teams.
- + It's a race to score and blue scores first for a point.



- + The coach adds a goalkeeper for each team
- + The goalkeeper plays a short pass to the attacker who penetrates quickly on the dribble.
- + The red player scores first for a point



- + A defender is added for the final sequence.
- + The red goalkeeper has played quickly to the red attacker who decides to penetrate yellow's area.
- + Red attacker beats the yellow defender and shoots wide of the yellow goalkeeper to score 1 point.

1V1 DUEL

WHY USE IT

This is a very simple activity to set up and for the players to understand. Players will learn the importance of arriving to the ball quickly and they will develop confidence to beat a player on the dribble and also tackle their opponent.

SET UP

The set-up is a rectangle 30x20 yards with an appropriately sized goal at one end. The coach can decide whether or not to play with a goalkeeper to begin the activity. The coach stands at the other end with a large supply of balls. Either side of the coach are 2 teams of 4-5 players waiting behind a cone equal distance away from the goal.

HOW TO PLAY

Some young players take time to develop their confidence and understanding of the need to 'take the ball' from another player. Running alongside the opponent as they dribble towards goal is common place. 1v1 duels provide the coach with an opportunity to teach players different ways to beat a player and also how to apply defensive pressure and take the ball away from an opponent. The coach initiates each duel with a pass into the area and a player from each team sprints forward in an attempt to score first. The player reaching the ball first should be encouraged to continue towards goal on the dribble or shoot if within shooting range. The other player must try to get in front or goal side of the attacker and win possession. Play until one player scores or the ball leaves the area. Depending on the ability of the players, the coach can send multiple pairs as soon as the area is clear and build up to 2v1 and 2v2 duels.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - The set up and starting positions for this activity encourages speed - quickness of reaction when the coach first passes the ball and the first player to the ball is ideally positioned to score. It also teaches players to recover when slower than their opponent and to work hard to win back possession.
- + Coaching tips - Angle the service of the ball to provide one player an attacking advantage over another. An angled ball wide also slows the attack and creates a 1v1 duel.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

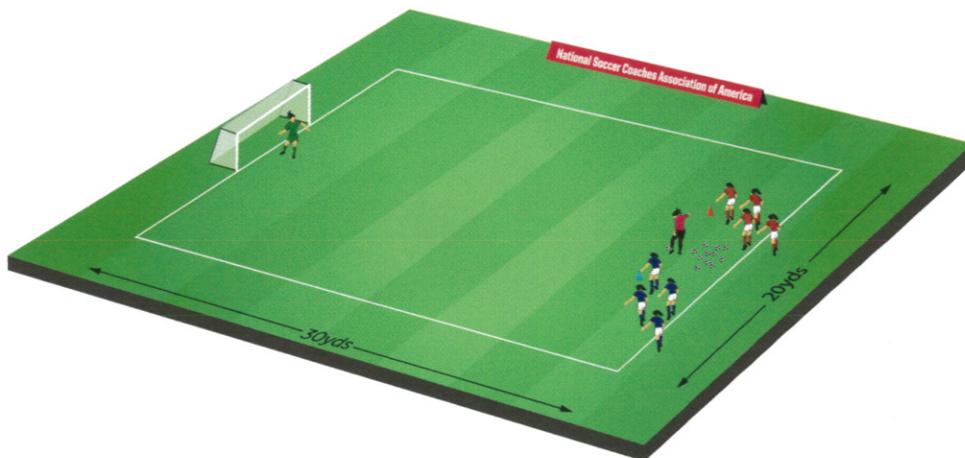
- + Less challenging: Start without the goalkeeper and move the starting positions closer to the goal.
- + More challenging: The coach can pass the ball wide to give one team the advantage, change the starting positions to attack from wide positions, serve the ball in different ways, send multiple duels and play 2v1 or 2v2.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

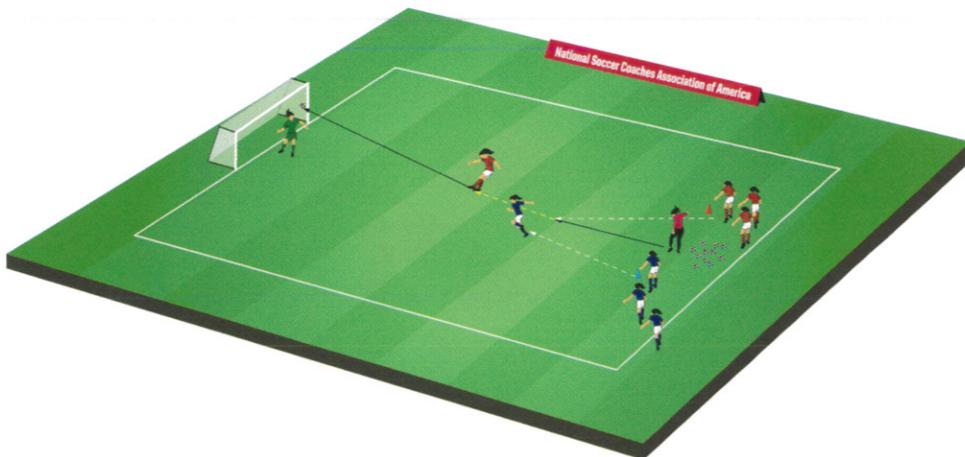
Stage 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

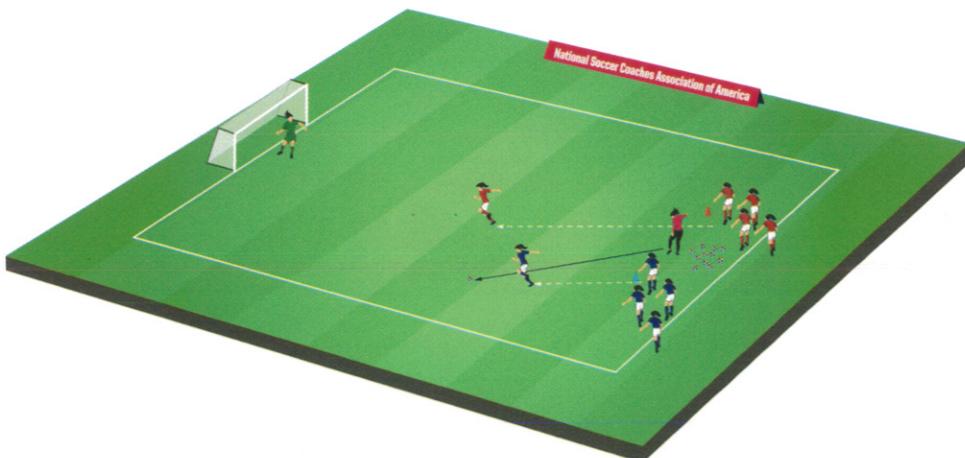
Top 3 themes: Shooting at an unopposed/opposed goal, 1v1 attacking/defending and dribbling. Top 3 competencies: Dribbling take on moves, defensive pressure and shooting.



- + The coach stands at one end with a large supply of balls.
- + Either side of the coach are 2 teams with similar numbers of players waiting to play the game.
- + The coach can decide to play with or without a goalkeeper based on the ability of the players.



- + The coach plays a straight ball toward the goal.
- + The first red player to react and gets to the ball quickly, dribbles and then shoots.
- + The blue player is slow to leave the cone and as a result cannot recover in time to prevent a goal.



- + The coach plays a wide pass in favor of the blue player.
- + The blue player needs to chase the ball wide and as a result the red player has an opportunity to recover.
- + Instead of 2 players running onto the same ball the coach's pass creates a face-to-face duel.

SUPER STRIKER

WHY USE IT

Players have plenty of opportunity to dribble, perform take on moves, shoot and defend in this activity. All the critical elements from the competency matrix for Stage 1 are included in 'Super Striker.'

SET UP

The set-up is a rectangle 30x20 yards with 4 small goals at one end. The area is divided into three - shooting, defending and skills zones. In the skills zone there are 12-20 different colored cones randomly distributed. Players wearing vests are split into 3-4 equal teams and each player dribbles a ball in the skills zone.

HOW TO PLAY

The intensity and challenge can be ramped-up quite quickly and so the coach should decide how quickly and how far to progress this activity. To begin the players dribble their balls around the area moving in and out of the cones. To prevent players standing, watching the action or waiting for their turn, add a condition - players and soccer balls must be moving before the coach calls on that team to shoot. When the coach calls a color the players dribble at pace through the defending zone before entering the attacking zone for a shot. To add some additional challenge the first player to score dribbles back to the skill zone and the other 2 players move into the defending zone without a ball. When the coach calls the next color the 2 defenders attempt to win the ball.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Scoring goals is the priority in this activity. To begin let the players get close to goal before shooting and then start to impose conditions such as 2-3 touches only when they enter the shooting zone.
- + Coaching tips - Early on in the development process the coach will want to work with players to strike a moving ball. The tendency will be for players to allow the ball to come to rest before shooting, so imposing a 'moving ball' condition will result in players trying to take the shot in stride.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

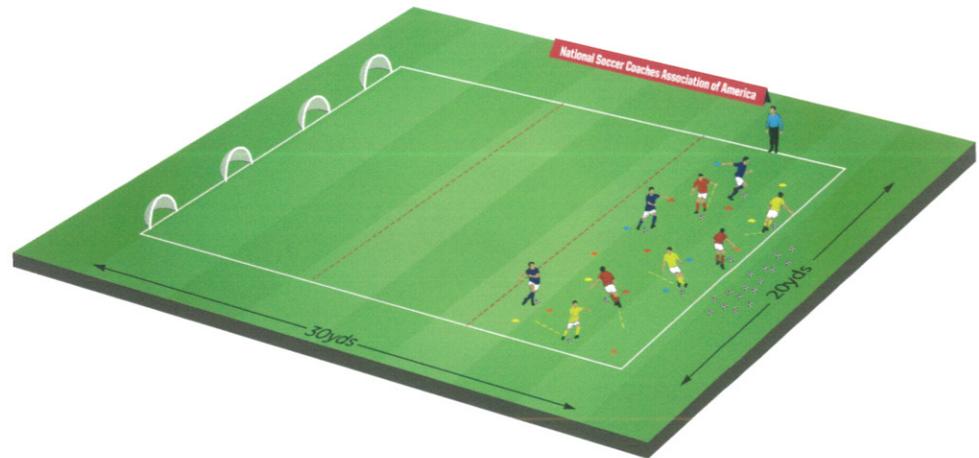
- + Less challenging: Play without defenders or goalkeepers and keep movements and patterns simple.
- + More challenging: Players must dribble around a sequence of colored cones before entering into the middle zone. The coach can also add defenders, allow two touches only in the shooting zone and insists players perform a take on move in the defending zone.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stage 1, 2 & 3 - 3-11 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

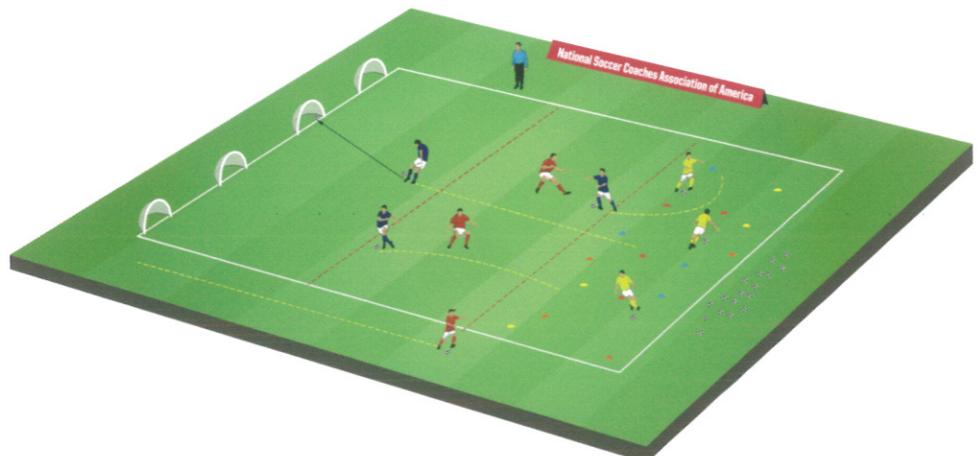
Top 3 themes: Shooting at an unopposed/opposed goal, 1v1 attacking/defending and dribbling.
Top 3 competencies: Dribbling take on moves, defensive pressure and shooting.



- + Players wearing red, blue and yellow training vests dribble around cones in the 'skills zone'.
- + The coach may decide to have older players dribble in a sequence such as, red-yellow-blue and orange cones.
- + The coach must encourage the players to keep the ball moving, weaving in and out of the cones and using the laces to stroke the ball.



- + The coach shouts "RED" and the 3 red players immediately enter the defending zone.
- + Without defenders present in the middle zone the coach instructs the red players to perform take-on moves.
- + As players enter the shooting zone they must set up the shot with one touch. Who will be the first to score?



- + In the final sequence once the first player scores, he/she dribbles back around the outside.
- + The other 2 red players enter the defending zone and must now defend against the 3 blue attackers.
- + One of the blue attackers manages to penetrate centrally between the defenders and score.

1V1 TO TWO GOALS

WHY USE IT

This activity primarily focusses on the attacker, but it can equally benefit defenders in the 2nd/3rd stages of development. The attacker has many opportunities to perform take-on moves and score in an unopposed goal.

SET UP

20x10 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at one end and a starting cone centrally located along the end line. 2 groups of 4 players start facing each other and the coach starts the activity with all the balls on the sideline. With younger players, solicit the help of 2 assistants/parents to ensure the players start in the correct position.

HOW TO PLAY

In its most simplistic form, the coach starts the activity serving a ball to the first attacker positioned at the end opposite the goals. At the other end, the first defender can enter the field as the coach plays the pass. This activity includes 3 key elements of young player development, namely, 1v1 attacking, shooting at an unopposed goal and dribbling. The attacker must use take-on moves learned in practice and during the warm-up activity (such as Can You? Or Coach Says), to beat the defender and shoot at an unopposed goal. After each player has had a couple of attempts to attack and defend the coach can then initiate multiple 1v1 duels. Add a counter attack goal at the attacker's end of the field to provide the defender with an objective when they win the ball.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Introducing players to basic attacking (penetration) and defending (pressure) principles of play is important early in the development process. 1v1 duels should be a feature of training at stages 1 and 2.
- + Coaching tips - Correctly, coaching schools encourage coaches to limit 'line drills' to maximize player engagement and involvement. As soon as the players understand the activity, initiate multiple duels to reduce wait time for players.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Place a cone to represent the defender and the area to perform the take-on move, no goalkeepers, coach serves the ball and play one duel at a time.
- + More challenging: Defender passes a ball to the attacker then defends, add a counter attack goal, send multiple groups and add players.

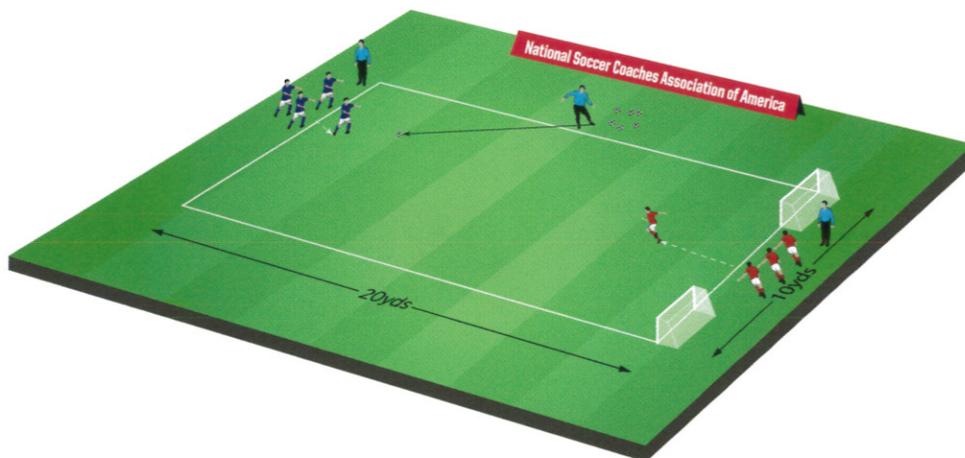
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1, 2 & 3 - 3-11 year old players

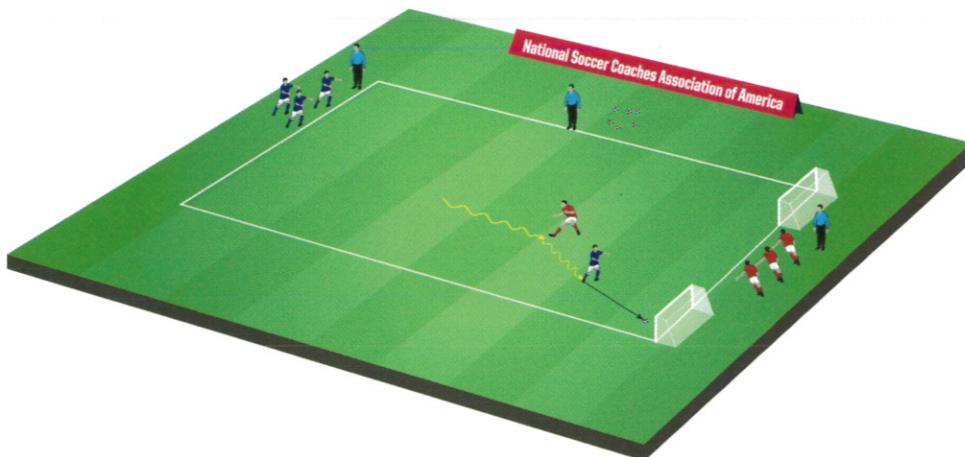
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, shooting at an unopposed goal and dribbling.

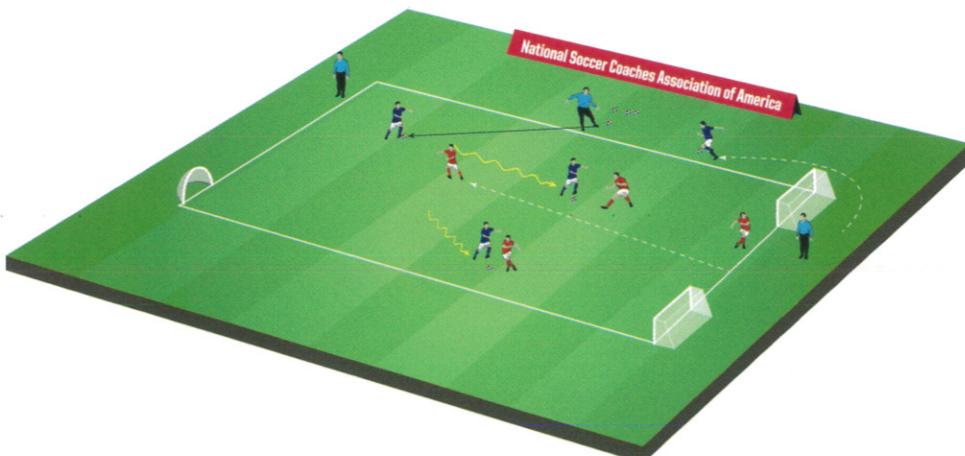
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, take on moves and shooting.



- + 4 blue attackers start 20 yards from goal, facing 4 red defenders.
- + The coach passes the ball to the first attacker and the first red defender comes forward to defend.
- + An assistant coach is at both ends to help players prepare for their attempt.



- + The attacker beats the defender with a take-on move (feint, cut, scissors etc) learned in the warm-up.
- + The attacker shoots at an unopposed goal positioned wide on the end line.
- + The coach sends the next pair of players.



- + Once the players are familiar with the activity, the coach initiates multiple 1v1 duels.
- + A counter attack goal has been added to provide the defender an objective when winning the ball.
- + Players must get into the start positions quickly after a duel has finished.

BATTLE OF THE KNIGHTS

WHY USE IT

This activity is a great way to finish off a training session with young players. Every player is involved in the activity - attacking and defending.

SET UP

Two rows of 12 hat cones are laid out 25 yards apart and 2 teams of 10 players stand facing each other behind the cones. Place a soccer ball on top of each cone to represent a castle. Each player also has a ball - the Knight's arrow. The coach stands on the sideline in a good position to see all the action and solicits the help of an assistant to support each team.

HOW TO PLAY

The Kingdom has been divided and two opposing families are staking claim to the throne. Both families send their Knights into battle with the purpose of destroying the other's castle. Teams must decide how many Knights are needed to defend and how many should be sent to defeat their opponent. Start by sending one team on the offensive while the other team watches. Each player on one team dribbles a ball the length of the area and shoots their arrow in an attempt to knock off a ball from a cone. To add a degree of challenge give the players 10 seconds to take their shot. Any balls knocked off the cone remain off and then the other Knights have an opportunity to attack. Continue this sequence until all balls are knocked off by one team. As a progression the coach can now add a shooting line 5 yards from the cones at both ends to prevent players dribbling all the way up to the cones. Finally play with both teams competing against each other simultaneously.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Introducing players to basic attacking - penetration on the dribble, shooting and defending pressure.
- + Coaching tips - Over time a coach will find 3-4 activities that players will respond positively to no matter what the circumstances. Sometimes the coach should be prepared to change the plan if things are not working as anticipated. 'Battle of the Knights' is always popular and a great fall-back activity for a coach.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Let each team attack without defenders, reduce the number of castles and provide more time for the players to shoot.
- + More challenging: Include a time limit, add a shooting line, play with both teams and reduce the number of balls in play to start.

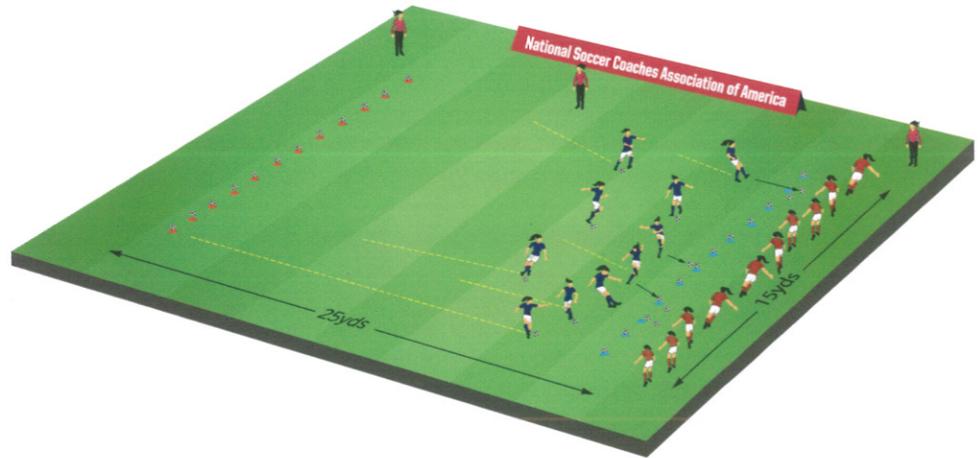
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1 & 2 - 3-8 year old players

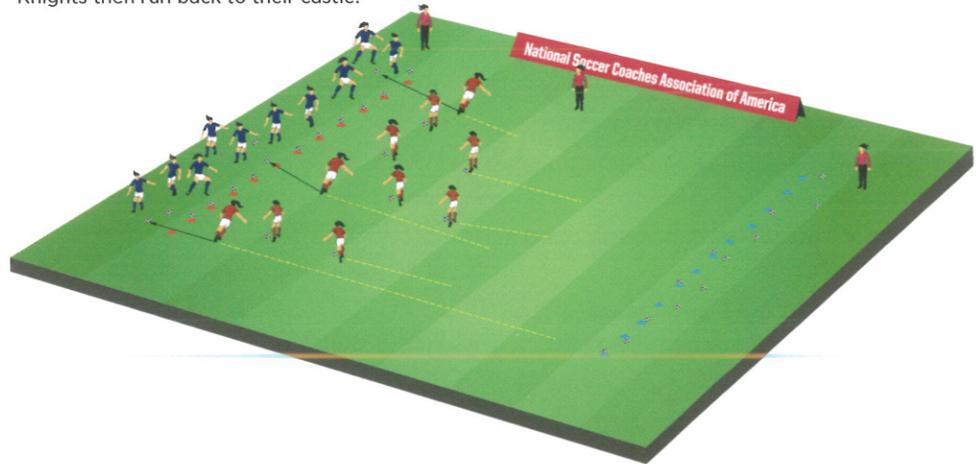
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, shooting technique and dribbling.

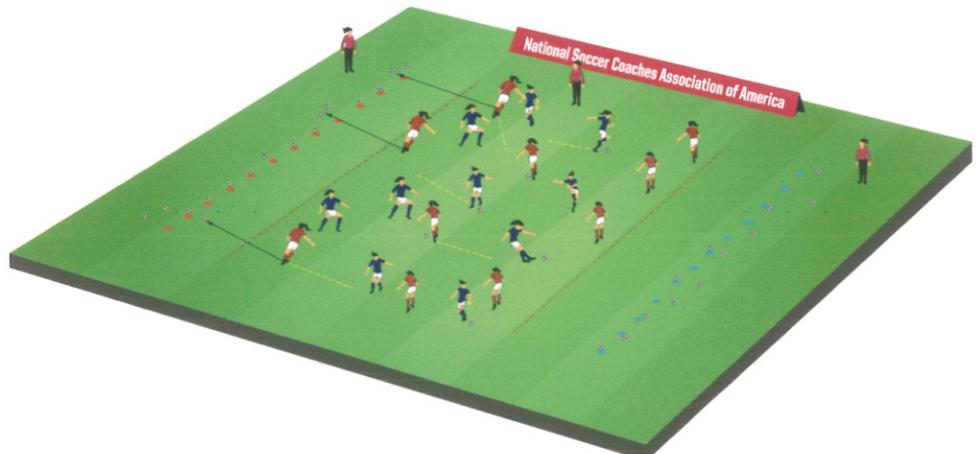
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, take on moves and shooting.



- + The Blue Knights start the activity by dribbling towards the Red Knight's castle.
- + The Blue Knights have 10 seconds to shoot their ball attempting to topple the Red's castle.
- + The Blue Knights can dribble as close as they like and any balls that are knocked off remain off. The Blue Knights then run back to their castle.



- + The coach sends the Red Knights to attempt to shoot or pass their ball to knock over the Blue's castle.
- + If a player does not shoot their ball within 10 seconds they lose the opportunity to shoot.
- + The coach can also impose that the ball must always be moving and a player is sent back if it stops.



- + In the final sequence both teams are now competing against each other, each team starting with 2 balls.
- + Some of the players are attacking the opponent's castle and others are staying to defend.
- + 1v1 duels are appearing all over the field and all players are engaged in the 'Knights Battle'.

STAGE 2 - MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (6-8 YEARS OLD)

A 6 year old is eager, active and likes to be on the go. Although keen to act independently, a 6 year old needs parental approval, understanding, praise and encouragement. Pushing too hard or expecting too much can result in the child becoming tense and nervous. An 8 year old is able to accept moderate responsibilities. Peer groups become important and the child will identify with other youngsters of the same sex and with similar interests and activities.

DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Movement skills and technical development remain top of the agenda in Stage 2.
- Small sided games and teamwork activities are introduced.
- Speed training commences for Girls (6-8 years) and Boys (7-9 years)
- Optimal time for training suppleness occurs for both Girls and Boys in stages 2 and 3 (6-10 years)

KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 2

Physically	Psychological/Social	Cognitive/Mental
1. Coordination and body control improve rapidly as there is slower growth.	1. Interests often change rapidly.	1. Imaginative, spontaneous and creative.
2. Boys and girls have equal ability.	2. Enjoys initiating activities.	2. Able to stay on task longer due to increased attention span.
3. Reaction time is slow, but improves as the child grows.	3. Enjoys being praised for endeavors from adults.	3. Likes to be tested but often dislikes public failure.
4. Lots of energy as endurance levels but there are fluctuations in energy.	4. Starts to become more independent and attempts to exercise more control over own environment.	4. Likes to try new activities.
5. High need for skill development.	5. Appreciates consistency in own environment.	5. Better able to understand and learn because of growing memory capacity.
6. Fine motor skills developing.	6. Learns by repetition.	6. Starting to visualize instructions –although demonstrations are much more concrete.
7. Visual and hand/eye coordination improving.	7. Experimental, exploratory behavior is part of development.	7. Inconsistent attention span.
8. Height and weight increasing at a steady rate.	8. Still egocentric – each player wants a ball.	8. Interests can be short and fast changing.
9. Balance improves with ear developments.	9. Peer group becomes increasingly important.	9. Highly verbal.
10. Learns best by being physically active.	10. Players are concrete thinkers and find abstract concepts difficult.	10. Asks fact-orientated questions (e.g., wants to know how, why and when).
11. Needs to repeat activities that are well known and mastered.	11. Players start to develop powers of reasoning – if you do 'X' the result will be 'Y'.	11. Rapid development of mental skills.
12. Eye development and ability to track objects in motion improving.	12. Easily motivated and eager to try something new. Willingness to seek risk and adventure.	12. Greater ability to describe experiences and talk about thoughts and feelings.
13. High center of gravity, so balance can be difficult.	13. Needs guidance and praise from adults to stay on task and to achieve the best performance.	13. Less focus on one's self – seeks social comparison.
	14. Increasingly self-assured but can be childish and silly at times.	
	15. Stronger sense of right and wrong.	
	16. Growing desire to be liked and accepted by friends.	
	17. Enthusiastic and impatient.	