

### DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS TRANSLATED TO COACHING PLAYERS IN STAGE 2

#### TRANSLATED TO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THIS MEANS

1. Continued involvement of fundamental movement skills – running, jumping, skipping, throwing etc
2. Focusing on ball familiarization and dribbling skills – one ball per child.
3. Introduction of paired and cooperation activities.
4. Help players understand a task by demonstration and asking questions
5. Sessions requiring players to be extremely active.
6. Selecting activities that do not place undue stress on the muscles, bones and energy systems of the body.
7. Repeating activities regularly – constant change and insufficient reinforcement negatively affects learning
8. Camouflaging and concealing technical information by using names, characters and stories.
9. Encouraging trial and error, keeping instruction to a minimum
10. Using equipment and props to increase complexity but continue to make the sessions fun – hurdles, hoops, ladders, bean bags, etc.
11. Including competitive games, but emphasize success other than just winning (i.e. effort)
12. Providing considerable encouragement.
13. Including 'games and matches' in every session
14. Introduction to small sided games – 2 v 2 to 4 v 4 – play at the end of a practice session – don't sacrifice practice sessions for games at this stage.
15. All players to receive fundamental goal keeping skills – catching, throwing and diving (players love to dive!).
16. Introduce basic rules of the game – including restarts when ball leaves the field.
17. Passing skills can be introduced.
18. Avoiding temptation to place players in specialist positions (i.e. full back, forward or goal keeper)

# ACTIVITIES LISTING FOR STAGE 2: PLAYERS 6-8 YEARS OLD

## 45 1V1 TO 2V2 OLYMPICS

- + Stages 1, 2, 3 - 3-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

## 46 1V1 TO 3V3 TEAM WARM-UP

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1, small group attacking, defending and dribbling.

## 47 TURN AND SHOOT 1V1

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1, shooting and creating space.

## 48 1V1 TO 2V1 SHOOTING

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1-2v1, shooting and creating space.

## 49 1V1 DUELS ROUND ROBIN

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

## 50 ATTACKING AND DEFENDING SKILLS DRILLS

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

## 51 2V1 WITH DEFENSIVE PRESSURE

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking 2v1, defending 1v2 and dribbling.

## 52 DEFENDING TWO GOALS 1V2 AND 2V1

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking individually and in small groups, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

## 53 1V1 DEFENDING PRESSURE WIDE

- + Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Attacking individually, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

## 54 FULL PRESSURE DEFENDING 1V1-1V2

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: 1v1 attacking and defending, 1st defender and creating space.

## 55 PASSING PAIRS

- + Stages 2, 3 - 6-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, dribbling and creating space.

## 56 CRISS CROSS TECHNICAL TRAINING

- + Stages 1, 2 & 3 - 3-9 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, dribbling and creating space.

## 57 NUMBERS PASSING

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and communication.

## 58 1V1 TO 2V2 PASSING RHYTHM

- + Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving with the feet and creating space.

## 59 2V1V1 PASSING AND SUPPORTING ANGLES

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, creating space and defending 1v1.

## 60 ALL UP - ALL BACK 3V3

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.

## 61 COUNTDOWN

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.

## 62 DRIBBLE THE GAUNTLET

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, 1v1 defending and creating space.

## 63 SQUARES

- + Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing, receiving and creating space.

## 64 BLOCK AND POKE TACKLING TECHNIQUES

- + Stages 2, 3 - 6-11 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: 1v1 Defending, defensive pressure and tackling technique.

# 1V1 TO 2V2 OLYMPICS

## WHY USE IT

Players can earn points with great attacking and solid defending. As the activity progresses, the players are matched with an equally successful opponent - Gold, Silver and Bronze.

## SET UP

25x15 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at one end of the area. At the other end of the area the coach places a cone for each team 2 yards from the sideline. Approximately 15 yards along both sidelines is a cone and a large supply of balls are placed on the end line.

## HOW TO PLAY

To begin this activity the coach places a single soccer ball at the far end of the grid. On the command of "GO", the first person in each line sprints along the side of the field. The first person to reach the first cone continues around the second cone and collects the soccer ball. When reaching the first cone the slower player makes a bent run onto the field and prepares to defend. The attacker attempts to score in either of the two goals and the defender attempts to win the ball and dribble the ball over the end line. There must always be a winner after every duel - if the ball is kicked out of the area the coach decides which player had the best performance in that particular duel. The winner moves up a group and the loser moves down a group. After each player has had 8 to 10 repetitions, the player in the highest group wins the gold medal, second the silver medal and third the bronze medal.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - The rules of this activity naturally reward the quickest player. As in the game, the player in possession is the attacker and so it is important for the coach to impress upon the players to be ready, on their toes and cover the ground quickly.
- + Coaching tips - Providing young players with an opportunity to be successful is essential and to do so we have to differentiate our coaching. By placing a cone along the sideline a slower player will not be eliminated from the game. The slower player must prepare quickly to defend.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: To give each player equal opportunity to attack, adjust the starting positions and/or allow one player a head start.
- + More challenging: Increase the number of players to 2v2 or 3v3. Require the attacker to perform a particular move before scoring. Initiate multiple pairs at one time.

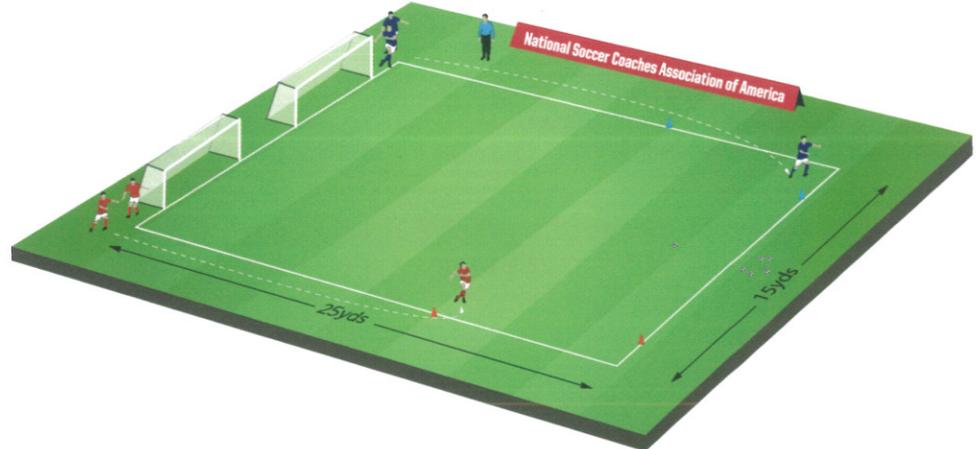
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

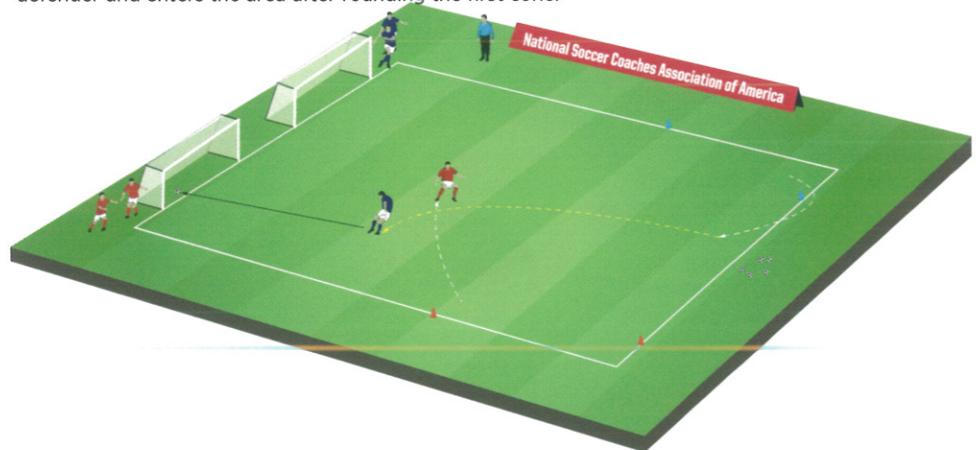
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

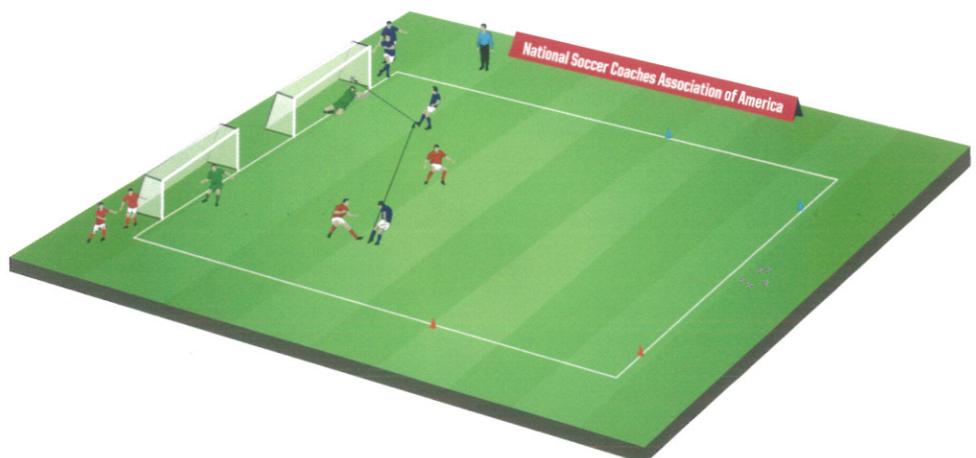
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + On the command of "GO" a player from each team sprints along the sideline.
- + The blue player reaches the first cone before the red player.
- + The blue player continues to sprint around the second cone and collect a ball. The red player is the defender and enters the area after rounding the first cone.



- + The blue attacker collects the ball and dribbles at the red defender.
- + The red defender attempts to win possession and dribble over the end line, but the blue attacker is too good and scores.



- + The coach progresses the activity by creating a 2v2 game and adding goalkeepers.
- + The blue team is again first to the ball and the reds defend.
- + A neat pass to split the defense presents the blue attacker with a goal scoring opportunity.

# 1V1 TO 3V3 TEAM WARM-UP

## WHY USE IT

This is a wonderful warm-up activity that can introduce numerous attacking and defending concepts and themes. Use this activity with younger and older youth players, adjusting the conditions to increase the intensity.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at each end. The coach stands at the halfway with a large supply of balls and 2 teams of players start at a cone 3 yards from the coach.

## HOW TO PLAY

To begin the session the coach plays a ball into the area and the first player in each line sprints to the ball. Based on the starting positions of the players the first player to the ball should attempt to take a firm touch towards the goal and score. Playing 2v2 enables the coach to teach players different movements and combinations, such as an overlap, under lap and wall pass. The coach can also discuss the importance of maintaining possession if a quick attack is not available, with the available space often behind the player in possession. The coach should keep the activity flowing, sending multiple groups with a few seconds in between.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with the players to make decisions based on the position they receive the ball on the field, the number of teammates, teammate's position and the location of the opponents. As a general rule the order of decision making questions for young players is - Can I shoot? Can I dribble? Can I pass? As player's become more competent the order of the questions may change to: shoot - pass - dribble.
- + Coaching tips - The service from the coach will establish the challenge for attackers and defenders. For example, if the coach plays a short straight ball, the attacker will be able to see the field and penetrate quickly. If however the coach plays the ball long or behind one of the players, the attacker will start with momentum going away from goal.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

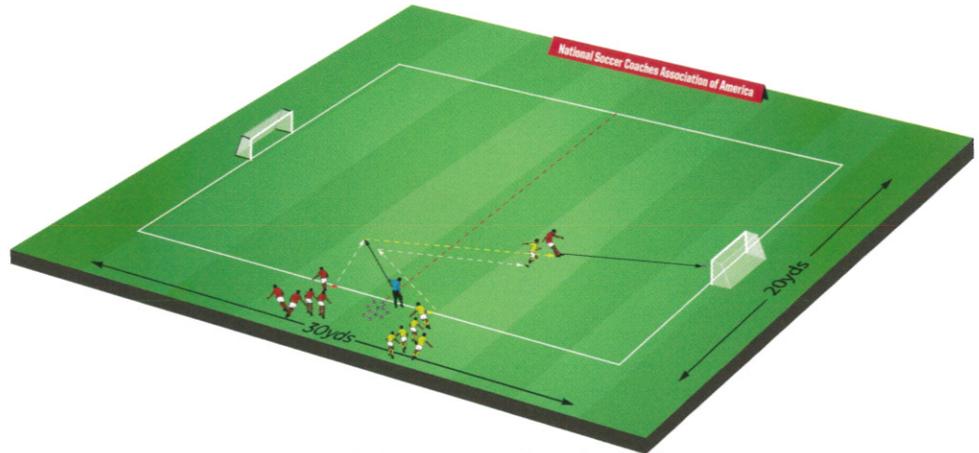
- + Less challenging: Keep the number of players on the field to a minimum - 1v1. The coach can also play straight passes to the attackers so they can see the whole field.
- + More challenging: Add more players gradually, change starting positions, serve the ball in different directions and speeds.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

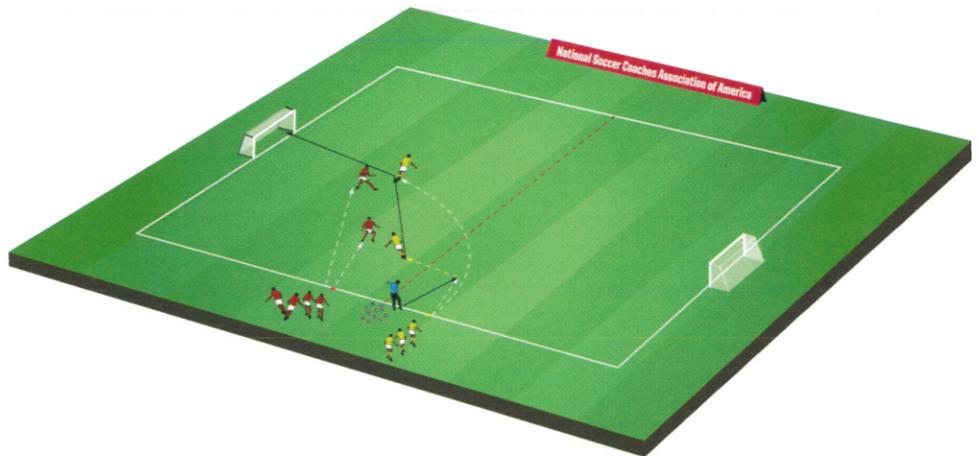
Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

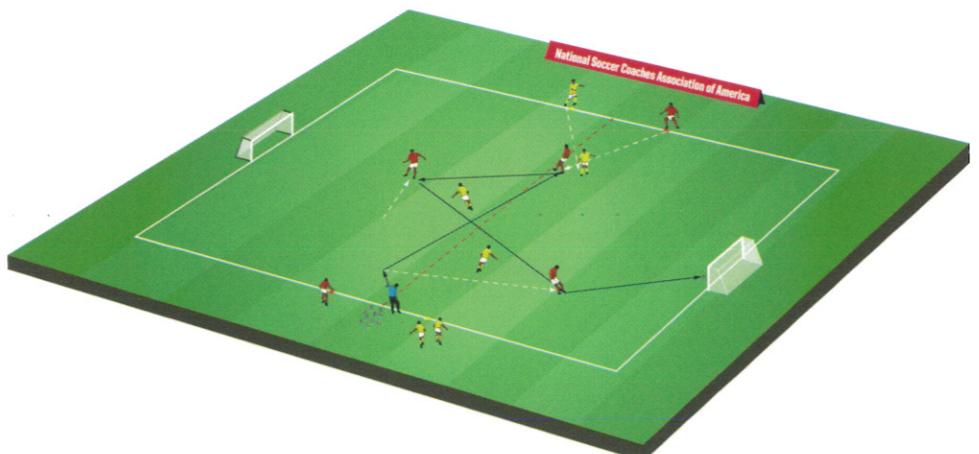
Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1, small group attacking, defending and dribbling.  
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + The coach starts a 1v1 duel with a ball played at an angle to the red player.
- + The yellow defender closes down the red attacker, but the attacker is able to beat the defender.
- + The red attacker shoots at an unopposed goal and scores.



- + The coach progresses the activity by playing 2v2.
- + The pass by the coach is short and straight and the yellow attacker is first to respond.
- + The teammate of the attacker exploits a massive space and makes an overlap to score.



- + In the final progression, the coach plays 3v3, with 1 player from each team entering from the far side.
- + The first red player entering from the ball side plays to the player entering the field on the far side.
- + Possession is maintained well by the red's with a pass backwards followed by a forward pass for a shot.

# TURN AND SHOOT 1V1

## WHY USE IT

This is an introductory shooting activity for players in late Stage 2 and Stage 3. Players receive numerous opportunities to pass over a short/medium distance, receive the ball, turn and shoot. Goalkeepers and defenders can be added for older players.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at each end. 2 cones are placed halfway, approximately 12 yards apart and 2 groups of players start in opposite corners with a large supply of balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

The focus is on the striker in the center shooting at goal, but the quality of pass made from the server, supporting runs following a pass, goalkeeping and defending can also be coached. The activity commences with a player from one group starting in the middle of the area facing the other group. The first player in the serving group makes a firm pass to the feet of the striker. With young players it is acceptable for the player to receive the ball and turn, but as the players get more proficient the coach should encourage the central player to move away from the ball and check back to replicate creating separation from a defender. On receipt of the pass the striker turns and attempts to shoot at goal within 2-3 touches. The coach can place some cones or run a line 8 yards from goal and the striker must shoot before crossing the line. Once the pass is made, the server should sprint to the middle and he/she is the next striker receiving the pass from the other group.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work on different turns to evade the defender and smartly take a shot. Sensing the direction of defensive pressure is essential for a striker who should constantly look over the shoulder to see the positioning of their opponent.
- + Coaching tips – Add defenders starting at the cones to each side of the striker. Only 1 defender is permitted to defend each serve and the coach should identify which defender is permitted to defend before the serve. Now the striker must decide how to receive into space to set up the shot.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Bring the servers closer to the center to shorten the pass. Remove the goalkeepers.
- + More challenging: Add defenders and goalkeepers. Let the defenders choose who defends.

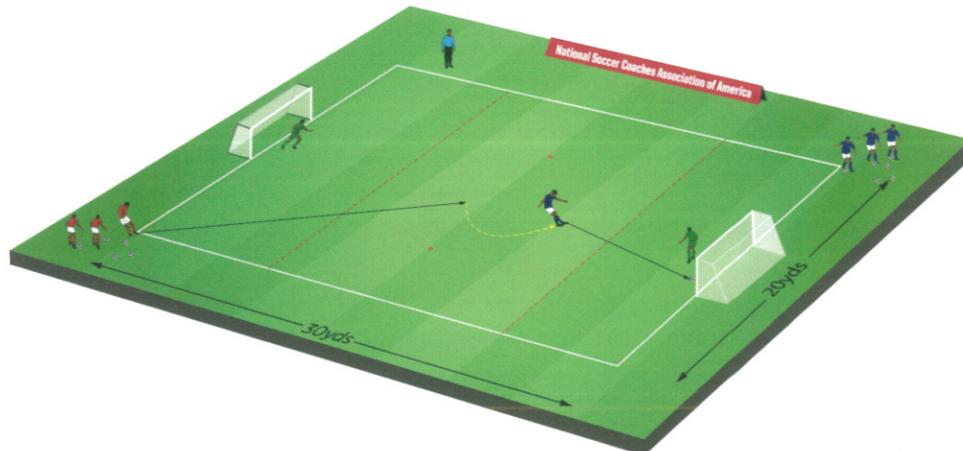
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

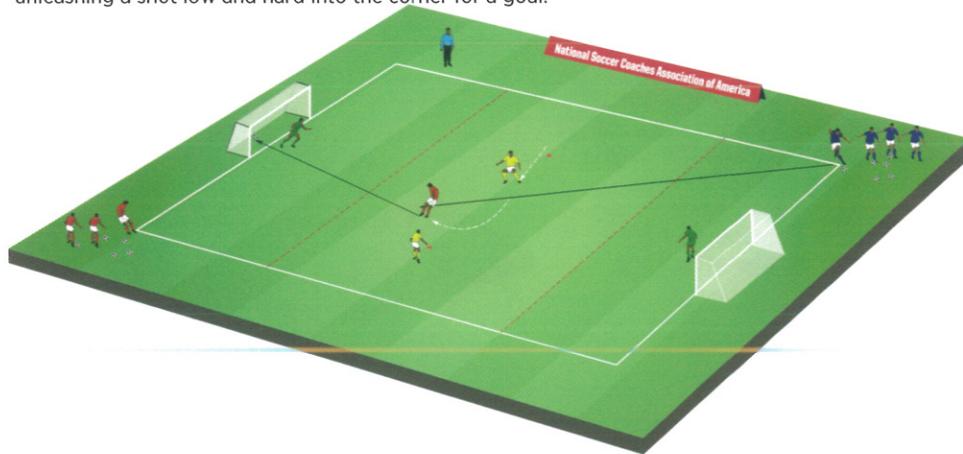
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1, shooting and creating space.

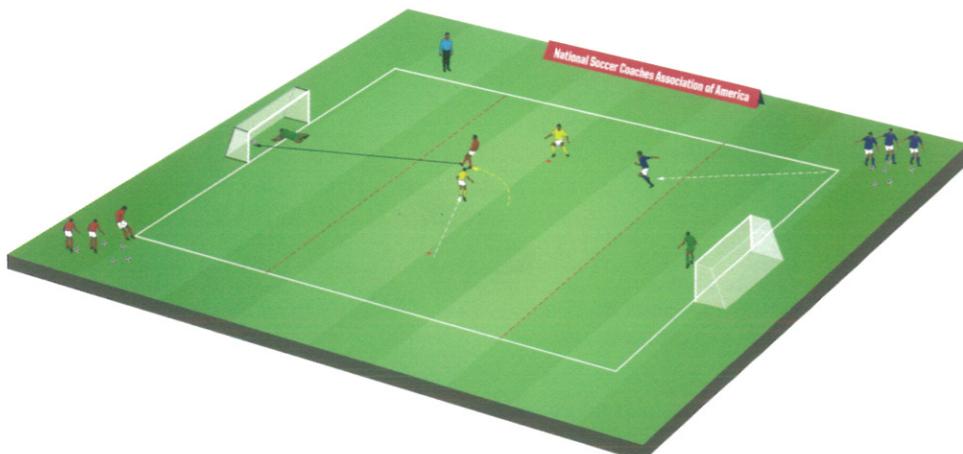
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and turning with the ball.



- + A blue player starts in the center of the area facing the red players. The blue striker must be on his/her toes.
- + The red server drives a short pass into the feet of the blue striker.
- + The striker decides to receive the ball on the half-turn and moves in the direction of the pass before unleashing a shot low and hard into the corner for a goal.



- + The red server continues his/her run into the center and becomes the next striker.
- + The coach has now added 2 defenders standing next to cones 5 yards inside each touch line.
- + Sensing the pressure is coming from the ball side, the striker allows the ball to run across the body.



- + In this sequence the defensive pressure comes from behind the striker.
- + After a quick glance over the shoulder, the striker plays a firm touch into space and shoots.
- + The striker's decision to turn to the ball side is a good one and the defender has no chance to stop the shot.

# 1V1 TO 2V1 SHOOTING

## WHY USE IT

In this activity all players will have an opportunity to attack with numbers-even and numbers-up and to defend numbers-even and numbers-down. Transition from one end to the other must be quick and players can demonstrate their creativity to beat an opponent.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 40x20 yards area with 2 appropriate size goals at each end and 2 teams with 5 players. In one half of the field a solitary defender waits to play 1v1 with an oncoming attacker and at the other end an attacker from the same team starts.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts the game with a pass to the team with 5 players starting next to the goal. The first player sprints out and receives the ball in his/her half of the field. The opponent in the same half is not involved in the first sequence and must not prevent the player from dribbling at the defender in the other half. The attacker dribbles at pace and attempts to beat the defender and shoot into an unopposed goal. As this action occurs a defender enters the field at the other end. If the attacker scores or misses, he/she must leave the field and rejoin the team and the coach passes a new ball to the defender to attack the other end 2v1. If a defender wins possession in either game, he/she should attempt to counter attack and score.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work through 2 different types of challenge for attackers and defenders. When playing 1v1 the attacker should be direct and down the middle, but in a 2v1 the dribbler should attack wider to create space for a teammate. Defensively, the player in the 1v1 can move forward aggressively to apply pressure away from goal, but when facing a 2v1 must be more patient to slow the speed of the attack.
- + Coaching tips - The benefits of playing without a goalkeeper to promote attacking confidence are numerous. However, the defensive benefits can be equally important. Without a goalkeeper a defender may wish to play high and aggressive and prevent the attacker getting close to goal.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Remove the goalkeepers.
- + More challenging: Build up player numbers, place a time limit to score and add the goalkeepers.

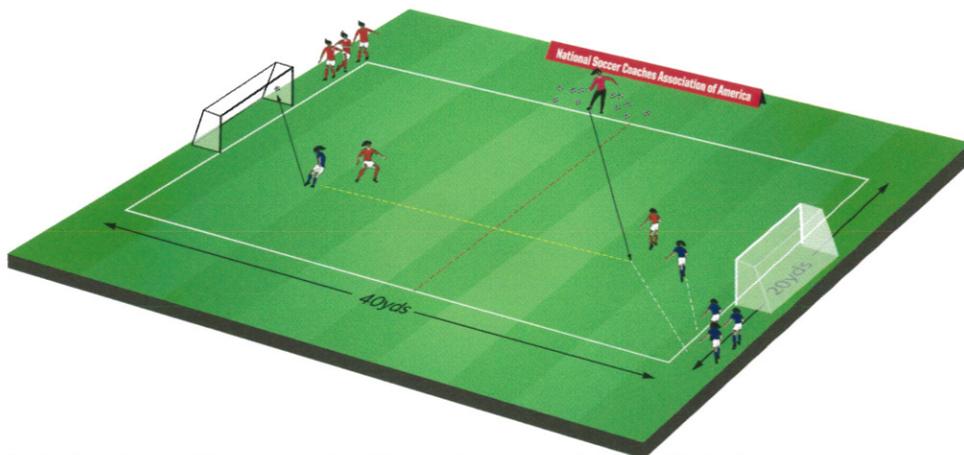
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

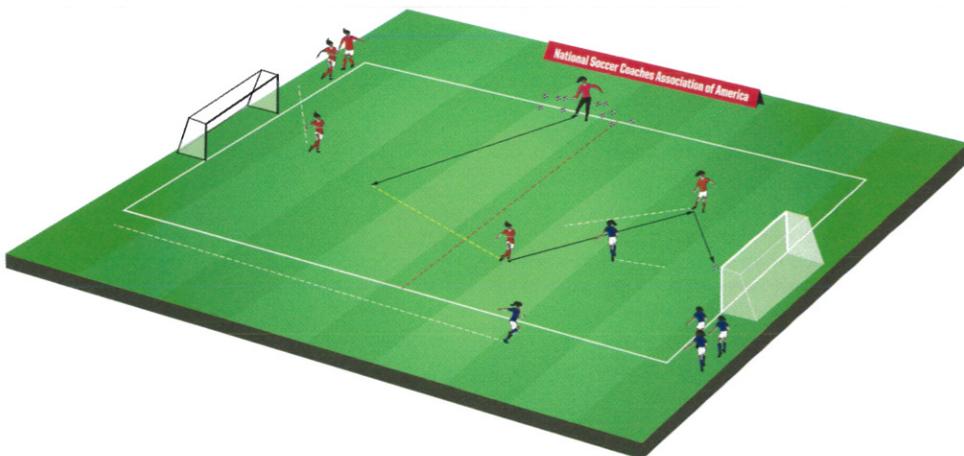
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking and defending 1v1-2v1, shooting and creating space.

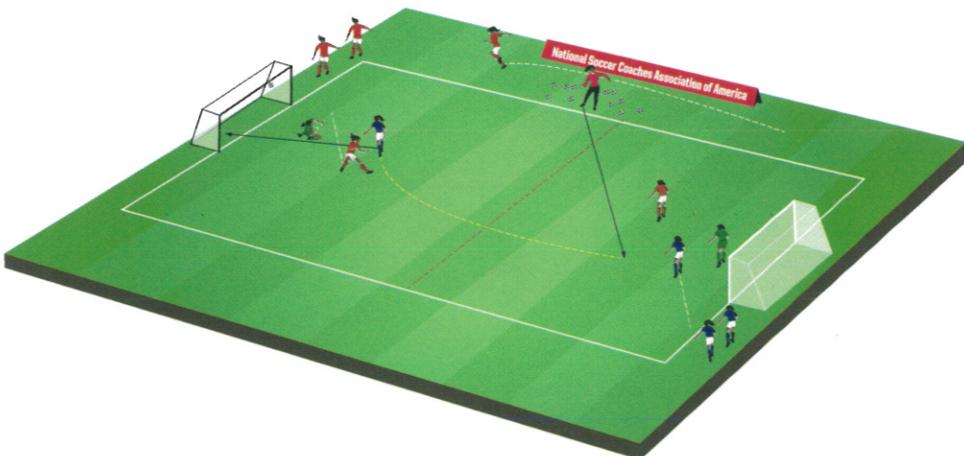
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and shooting technique.



- + In the first diagram the coach starts with a pass to an oncoming blue attacker.
- + The attacker dribbles the ball into the opponents half and beats the defender before scoring.
- + As the play progresses another blue player enters the field as a defender waiting for the reds to attack.



- + As soon as the blue attack is over the blue attacker leaves the field and the coach passes to the red defender.
- + The reds now attack the blues goal - 2v1. The red player dribbles at a slight angle to create space.
- + The other red attacker moves wide and creating that separation allows the attackers to combine and score.



- + In the final illustration the reds attack and a new red defender enters the area ready for the next blue attack.
- + The red attacking player from the previous sequence leaves the field and the dribbler stays on the field.
- + The coach has added goalkeepers to add to the complexity of the activity.

# 1V1 DUELS ROUND ROBIN

## WHY USE IT

The vast majority of time in Stages 1-3 should be dedicated to individual technical development. The modern game requires players to be competent in 1v1 attacking and defending. Who can win the 1v1 duels?

## SET UP

40x30 yards. 6 duelling areas, set up as shown. Each area has a different configuration. 2 teams of 6 with 1 player from each team in each area. 4 balls are strategically placed to allow quick restarts.

## HOW TO PLAY

This is a round robin competition, each pair competing in 6 game formats. Different rules apply - odd number field - reds start with the ball, even number fields - orange start: Area 1 - Players attempt to score on short/wide field. Area 2 - traditional shape field. Area 3 - players must stop the ball in the opponents end zone. Area 4 - players start on end line with attacker in front of defender. The coach passes the ball and attacker starts with back to goal. Area 5 - 3 flags in the middle. Attacker must beat defender and stop the ball in the triangle for a point. Area 6 - goals on the diagonal. These are intense 2 minute games, with 1 minute reset and movement to the next area. 3 points for a win, 1 for a tie and 0 for a loss.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - If focusing on attack - use take on moves to beat an attacker. Discuss with players how the setup changes the tactics - i.e. Where is the space in relation to the goal? Defending - force the attacker away from goal and towards the sidelines.
- + Coaching tips - Once the coach has established the rules, let the players play uninterrupted and let them referee their own games. Discuss ways the players can resolve disputes - such as alternate possession.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Keep the setup simple, creating more space to assist the attackers and less space to assist the defender.
- + More challenging: Add a neutral player to play with the attacker to create 2v1. Limit the number of touches the attacker has before scoring. Change the players starting positions.

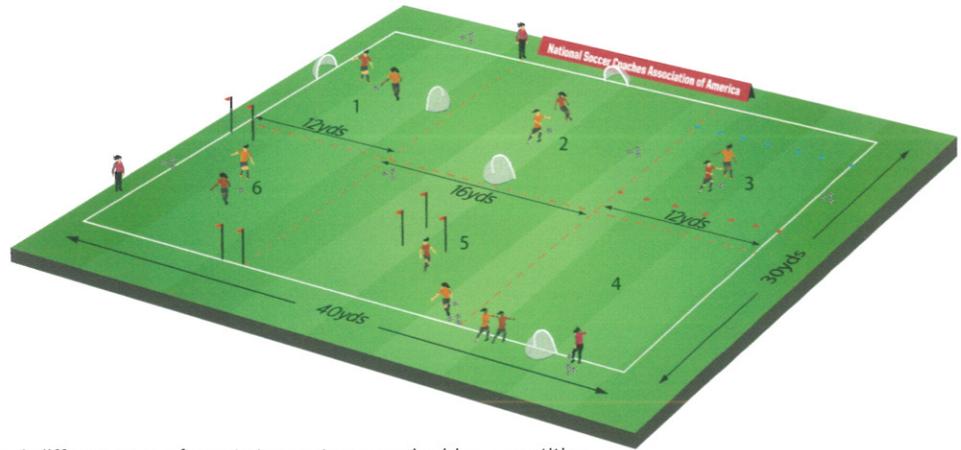
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

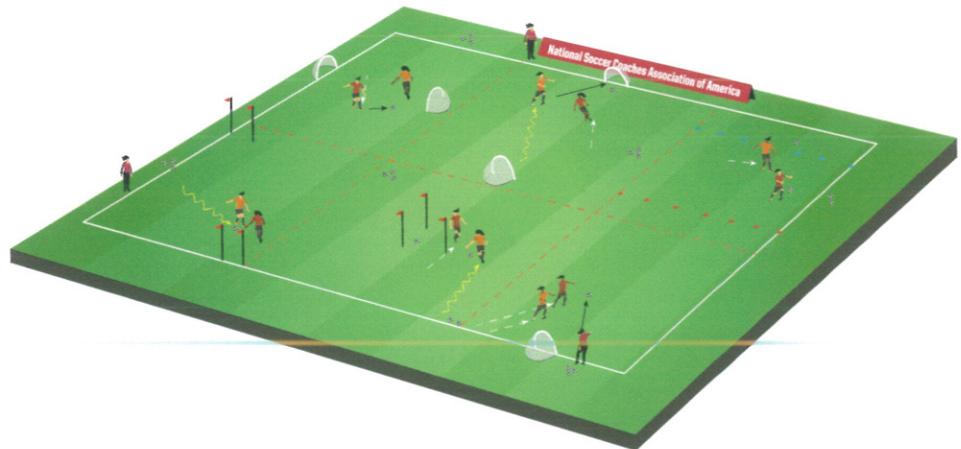
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + 6 different game formats to create a round robin competition.
- + All games start at the same time and last 2 minutes.
- + Reds start with the ball on fields 1,3 and 5 and orange start on fields 2,4 and 6.



- + The coach should allow the games to flow, making coaching points between games.
- + Encourage attackers to innovate, using moves they have learned to beat an opponent.
- + Work with defenders to apply pressure, stand on their feet and not dive into tackles.



- + After 2 minutes, the players should reset the area they were playing in and rotate.
- + Coaches move around the perimeter encouraging players in their attacking and defending responsibilities.

# ATTACKING AND DEFENDING SKILLS DRILLS

## WHY USE IT

This is a series of 3 different 1v1 activities that offer the players continuous repetition of defensive and attacking techniques. Varying starting positions and ball delivery will change the attacking and defending options.

## SET UP

1) - 20x10 yards rectangle with 2x2 yards cone goals placed on each long side. 2) - 20x20 yards square with a cone placed centrally on each side line and a 5x5 yards square in the center. 3) - 20x10 yards rectangle with 2x2 yards cone goals positioned in the corners at the opposite end to the players. Another cone is halfway along the sideline nearest the defenders.

## HOW TO PLAY

1) The defender passes firmly along the ground to the attacker. On receipt of the pass, the attacker attempts to score in either of the side goals. If the defender wins possession, he/she should dribble over the opponent's end line. 2) 2 attackers with a ball each take it in turn to dribble at a defender in the center of the square. The attacker must penetrate the square in the center. If the defender wins, he/she can dribble to a cone for a point. 3) The defender sprints along the sideline and enters the area through a small corner goal. When the defender reaches a cone placed halfway along the sideline, the attacker can dribble and attempt to score in either goal. The defender can score by dribbling over the end line.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - With the focus on individual pressure defending: Approach the attacker at pace and at an angle to force the attacker in a particular direction. Slow down when 4-5 yards away, lower the center of gravity and position the feet so the body is side on. If an opportunity arises to perform a poke tackle take the chance to win the ball, or wait until the attacker makes a mistake.
- + Coaching tips - A common mistake of young defenders is approaching the attacker square-on and swinging at the ball. Teach them the correct side-on position and the poke and block tackle techniques.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Make the area smaller to give the defender less space to cover and make the play more compact. Change the players starting positions to provide an advantage to the defender.
- + More challenging: Add more attacking players as the defenders become more competent.

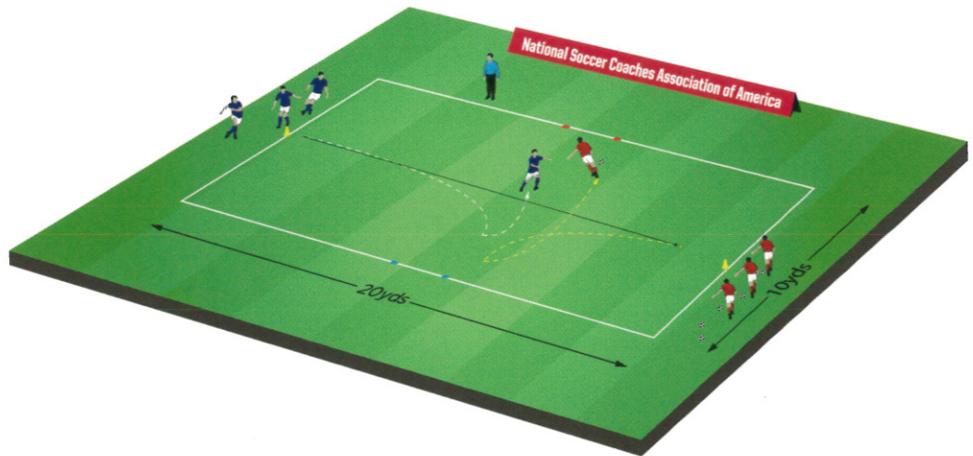
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

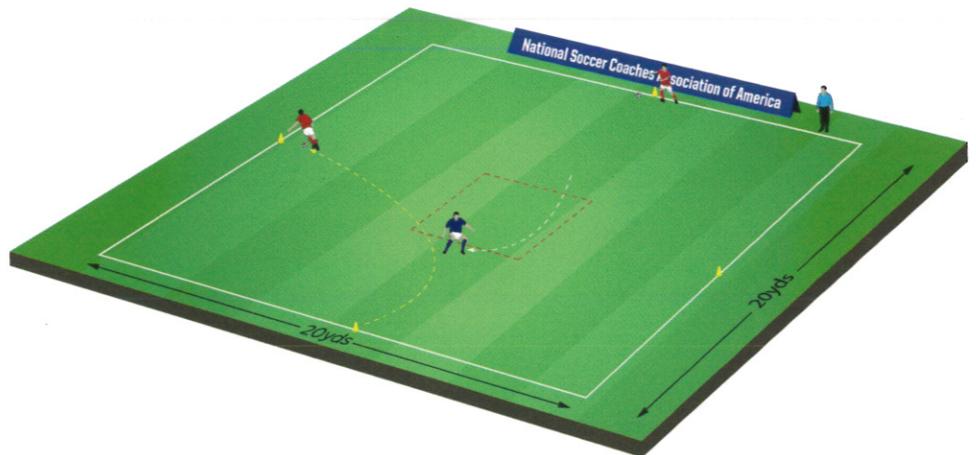
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 1v1, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + The blue defender passes firmly to the red attacker and then closes down space quickly.
- + The defender should apply pressure in an effort to force a mistake by the attacker.
- + A curved approach run to force the attacker to their weaker side is a good strategy for young defenders.



- + Alternating, the red attackers dribble at the blue defender and beat him/her.
- + The defender must reset quickly between attacks, moving forward to confront the attacker.
- + The attacker can dribble to any cone for a point.



- + The red defender sprints along the sideline and enters the area through a corner goal.
- + As the red defender reaches a cone halfway along the sideline, the blue defender attacks on the dribble.
- + The red defender makes a curved run and starts to close down space to prevent the attacker scoring.

# 2V1 WITH DEFENSIVE PRESSURE

## WHY USE IT

The defender is put through his/her paces in this fast moving activity. Intentionally the defensive player is selected late as the activity progresses, so players need to be attentive and 'read' the visual cues. This is an equally good attacking activity to work with players on penetration and support.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 25x15 yards area with an appropriate size goal at one end and two small counter attacking goals at the other. 2 attacking players with a large supply of balls start on the end line opposite the large goal and a pair of players are positioned 15 yards along both sides of the field. The coach can decide whether to play with a goalkeeper.

## HOW TO PLAY

An attacker starts the activity by dribbling towards the goal. On the attacker's 3rd touch he/she passes to either of the support players to the left or right. The player receiving the pass becomes the attacking teammate and the other player is the defender. The 2 attackers attempt to score and the defender must attempt to win possession and score in one of the counter attack goals. If the goalkeeper saves the ball he/she distributes to the defender for a counter. The first team to 5 goals wins and then change the teams over.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Once the defender is known he/she must prioritize preventing a shot at goal over winning possession. A curved run towards the goal followed by inching forward to close space is an appropriate tactic.
- + Coaching tips – The number of touches the coach imposes on the dribbling player should change the approach by the defender. 1-2 touches only before passing to the support player will provide the defender with more time to get into position, whereas 3-4 touches allows the attacker to make progress up the field and gives the defender less time to adjust.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Prevent the attacking player from dribbling before passing or allow just 1-2 touches. The coach can also narrow the field to make defending easier.
- + More challenging: Change the starting position of the attacker to present a different challenge and/or allow the dribbler 3-4 touches before passing.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 4 - 6-14 year old players

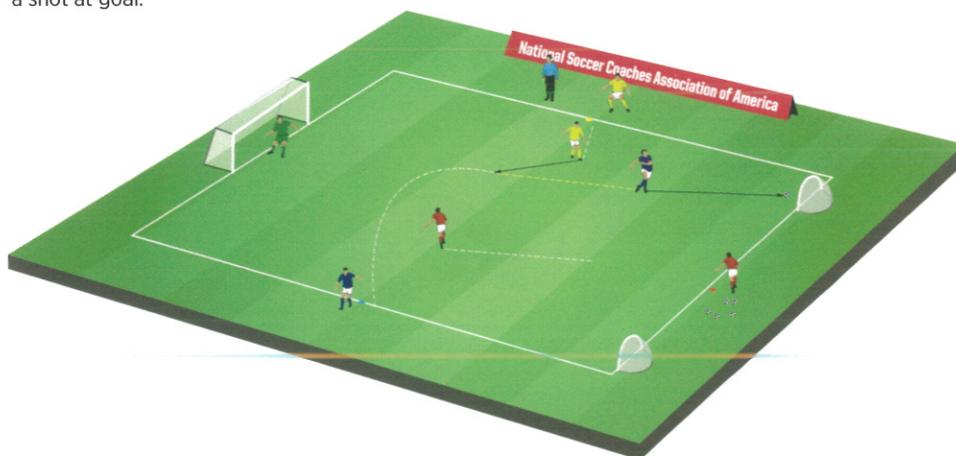
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking 2v1, defending 1v2 and dribbling.

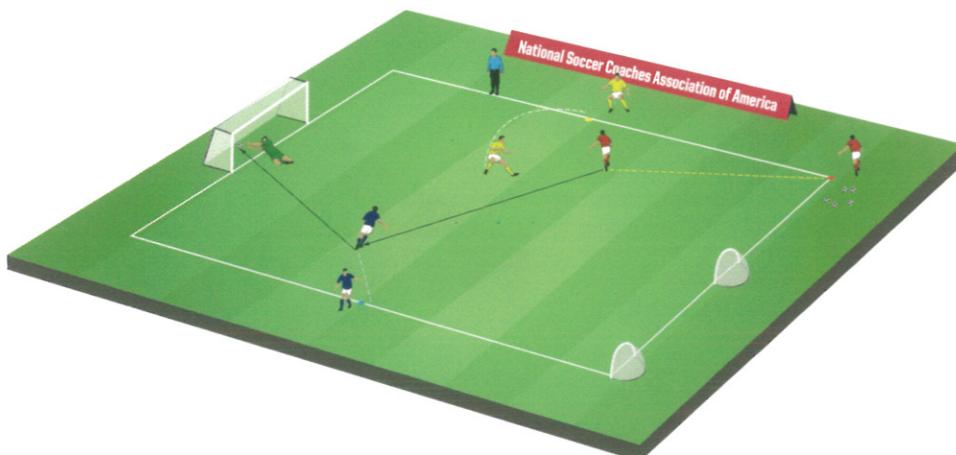
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + The red attacking player dribbles towards the goal and seeks to pass to a support player on the 3rd touch.
- + The blue and yellow support players wait at their cone and the red selects a teammate by passing to yellow.
- + The blue defender makes a straight run into 'no-man's land' allowing the attackers to combine and take a shot at goal.



- + In the second sequence the red attacker once again selects yellow as a teammate.
- + This time the blue player reacts quickly making a curved run to prevent the shot and apply pressure.
- + The yellow attacker is hurried into a poor pass and the blue player intercepts, dribbles and scores.



- + In the final illustration the coach has changed the angle by moving the attackers to the corner.
- + The new angle presents a different challenge as the red player dribbles directly at the defender.
- + The yellow defender overplays the dribbler and this enables the red player to release the blue into space.

# DEFENDING TWO GOALS 1V2 AND 2V1

## WHY USE IT

This is a fast-paced attacking and defending transition activity with plenty of goal scoring opportunities. Numbers can be added to progress from individual to small group duels.

## SET UP

The area is 25x25 yards with appropriate size goals centrally located on two sides of the square. Opposite each goal with a supply of soccer balls are two teams of four players. In the first instance play without goalkeepers.

## HOW TO PLAY

The activity commences with a black defender starting in the center of the area and 2 red players attacking the goal opposite their line. One red player dribbles or passes the ball to the other player. The attacking objective is to beat the black defender and score quickly. The defending objective is to win possession of the ball and pass the ball to the teammates on the sideline. As soon as the attack is over the black player and one of the red players leave the field and two black attackers attempt to score against the remaining red player. Play the first team to score 10 goals. To progress the activity the coach can play 2v2. The two attacking players must now be more creative if they are to beat a full strength defense. The coach can now work with the first defender applying pressure and the second defender covering.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the first defender to close down space and to apply pressure to the attacker on the ball. The second defender should drop deeper and if the first defender is beaten by the attacker, he or she will need to cover and prevent a shot.
- + Coaching tips – Setting up a continuous activity, where players are required to transition from a defensive role to an attacking role in the flow, mirrors game day conditions. These situations are important to replicate as often young players will lose concentration in transition.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

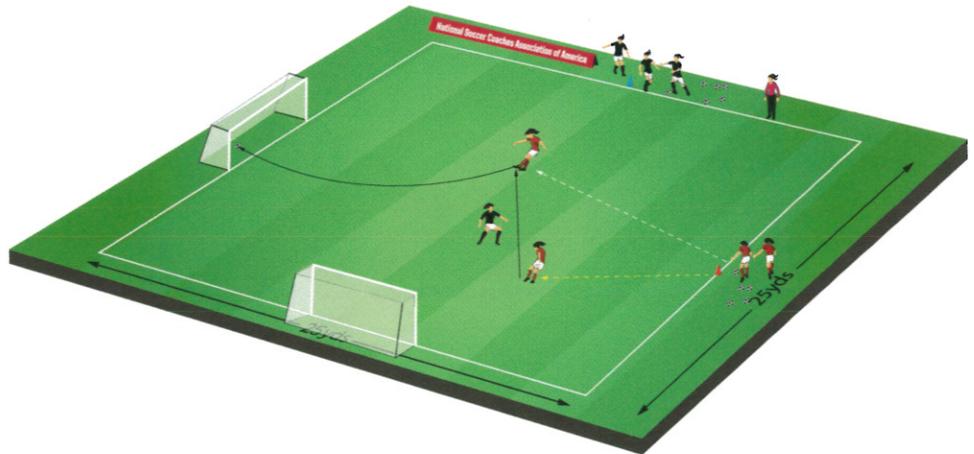
- + Less challenging: Start the activity without goalkeepers to give the attackers some shooting success. Play 1v1 if the defender is struggling against 2 attackers.
- + More challenging: Add more attacking players as the defenders become more competent and progress to even numbers.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

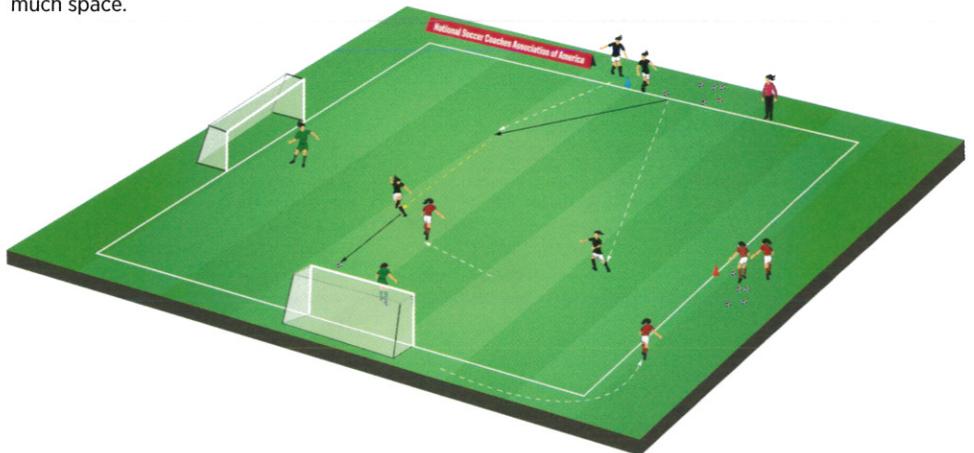
Stages 2, 3, 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

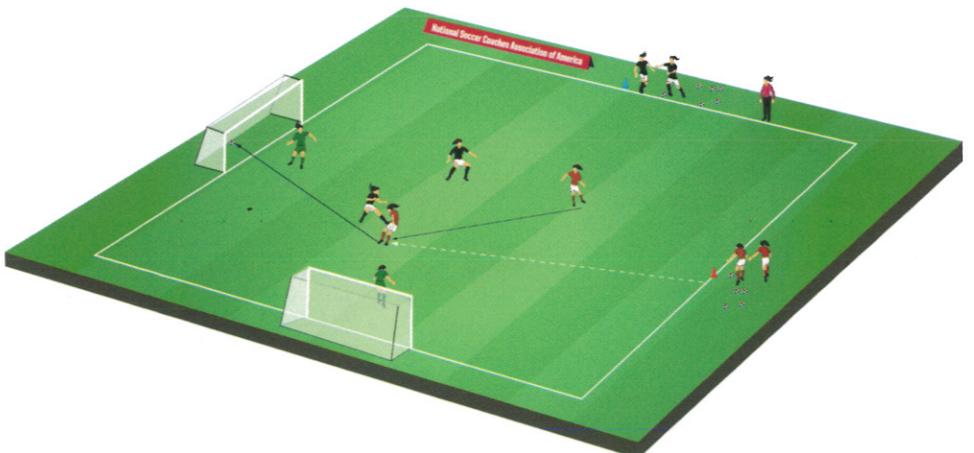
Top 3 themes: Attacking individually and in small groups, defending 1v1 and dribbling.  
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + A black defender starts in the center of the area and 2 red attackers attempt to score in the goal opposite.
- + Outnumbered, the black defender must prevent the player on the ball dribbling and shooting at an unopposed goal. Similarly, the defender must not over-commit and leave the second attacker in too much space.



- + As soon as the red attack has ended, the black defender and 1 red attacker must leave the field immediately.
- + Two black players now attack the remaining red player who has transitioned into defense.
- + On this occasion an early pass is made and the defender fails to close down the space to prevent a shot.



- + In the final sequence the coach has decided to play 2v2 with both attacking players transitioning to defense.
- + With two defenders the coach can work on pressure and cover defending.
- + Transition must be quick and all players should be alert and ready to attack and defend.

# 1V1 DEFENDING PRESSURE WIDE

## WHY USE IT

Applying defensive pressure does not always occur with an attacker approaching to the front of the defender. In this activity the attacker starts wide and the defender must attempt to keep the attacker away from goal.

## SET UP

The area is 30x20 yards with an appropriate size goal at one end. Along both sides of the field are counter attack goals and 3 cones are placed on the line opposite the goal. The defenders start from the center cone with a large supply of balls. The attackers start on the corner cones and a goalkeeper is in goal. There is a cone placed 10 yards from goal indicating how close the attacker must get before shooting.

## HOW TO PLAY

A defender starts with a pass to either side of the field in the path of an attacker. As soon as the pass is made the defender can enter the area and must attempt to prevent the attacker scoring in the large goal. The attacker can enter the area as the pass is made and dribble towards goal. The attacker must pass the cone 10 yards from goal before shooting. If the defender can win possession of the ball, he/she can score in either of the counter attack goals. Once each player has had an opportunity to attack and defend send pairs off every 4-5 seconds to keep the action constant.

## COACHING NOTES

+ Coaching objectives - When the defender is starting a recovery run from a central position he/she should take a direct route to goal with the objective of getting ahead of the attacker a priority. The defender can then attempt to cut-off the attacker, delay and force play to the width.

+ Coaching tips - To differentiate the activity the coach can manipulate variables to favor the attacker or defender. The coach can change the starting positions of both players, can adjust the angle of the initial pass and move the cone in front of goal.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

+ Less challenging: Start the activity without goalkeepers to give the attackers some shooting success. Hold the attackers run to give the defenders a head start.

+ More challenging: Remove the cone in front of goal to allow the attacker to shoot earlier and progress to 2v1 with both attackers entering the area from the corners as the ball is passed.

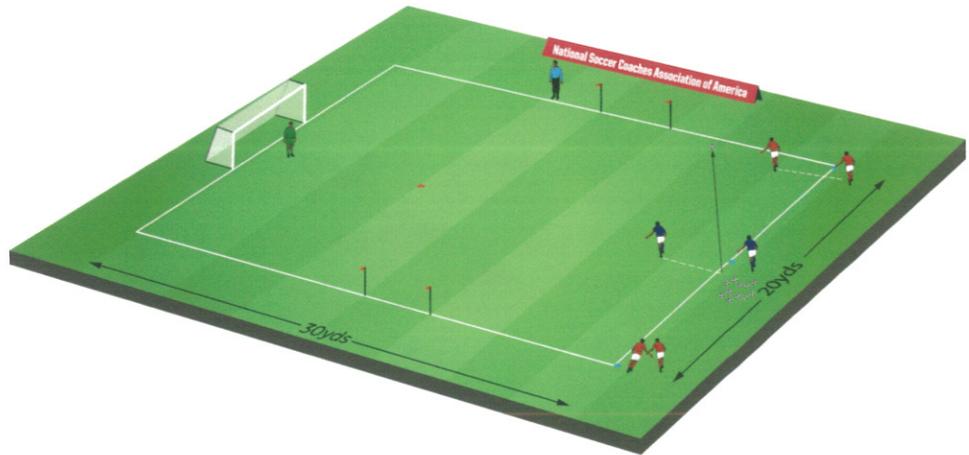
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

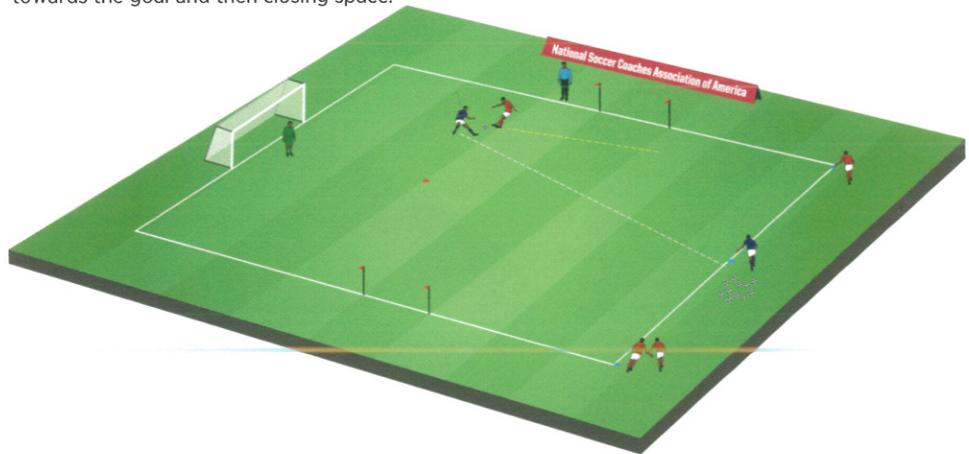
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking individually, defending 1v1 and dribbling.

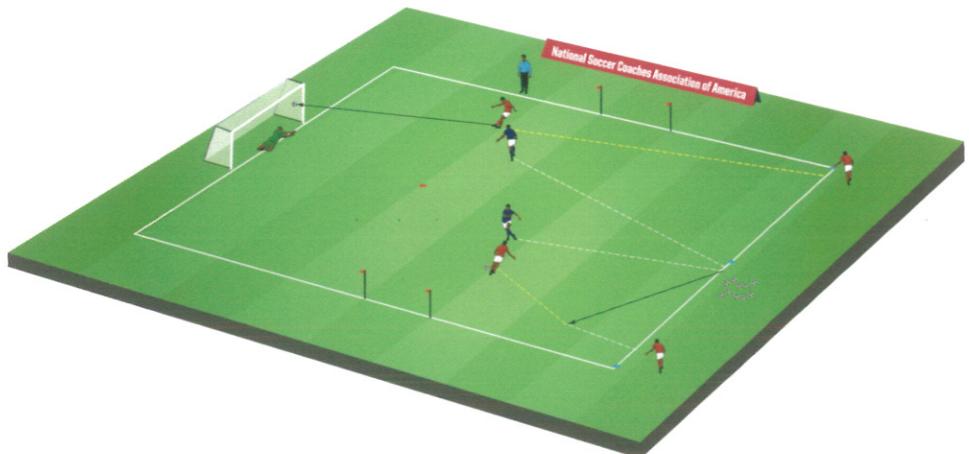
Top 3 competencies: Beating an opponent, defending pressure and creating space.



- + A blue defender starts from a central position with a supply of balls and passes wide to either red attacker.
- + As the ball is played into the path of the red attacker, the defender starts to make a recovery run.
- + Although the defender wants to win possession, the first priority is to cut off the route to goal by running towards the goal and then closing space.



- + In this illustration the defender has performed well and has managed to cut off the attacker's route to goal.
- + The next objective is to close down space and force play away from goal.
- + If the defender can force the attacker to turn away from goal he/she achieves the first defensive objectives.



- + As the activity progresses the coach sends pairs at 5 second intervals to maintain player engagement.
- + In one duel the defender is too slow to cut off the attacker and a goal is scored.
- + In the other duel the defender has covered the ground quickly and is well positioned to win possession.

# FULL PRESSURE DEFENDING 1V1-1V2

## WHY USE IT

This activity is equally as beneficial for defenders and attackers. Defensively, players work on closing space, applying pressure and intercepting passes. The attacker must create space, make firm accurate passes and be innovative in beating the defender.

## SET UP

20x20 yards area with 4x10 yards clearly marked. To begin, 2 servers from each team stand opposite each other at the center point of each sideline. Each team also has a pair of players in the center. Each server has a ball to start.

## HOW TO PLAY

Central players start in separate boxes as shown in illustration 1. Pairings are designated before the game commences. Orange is the attacker and black the defender in pair 1 and Black is the attacker and Orange the defender in pair 2. The attacking player in each pair initiates the activity by moving into any of the 4 squares - if a square is occupied by another pair, the attacker must move to an unoccupied area. The defender must play 'man to man', following the attacker. Once in a square the attacker calls/points to indicate the server from the same team to pass the ball. If the attacker receives the ball in the area and the defender is not in the same area, the attacker earns 1 point. If the defender tracks the attacker into the same square, no points. On receipt of the pass, the attacker must attempt to pass the ball back to the target to earn another point. If the defender can intercept the ball and play to either server of the same color, 2 points are scored by the defender. To reset, players jog to the starting positions and restart. First to 5 wins - rotate with the servers.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Defensive player must stay close to the attacker, adjusting the body position to see the ball and the player. Help defenders decide when to win the ball and when to be patient.
- + Coaching tips - If the defender is struggling to keep up, add a 2 touch condition to the attacker to slow the pace.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: No defender to begin - use shadow play. Restrict attacker to move in only one half.
- + More challenging: Add an extra attacker creating a 1v2 and on receipt, the final pass must be made to the other server.

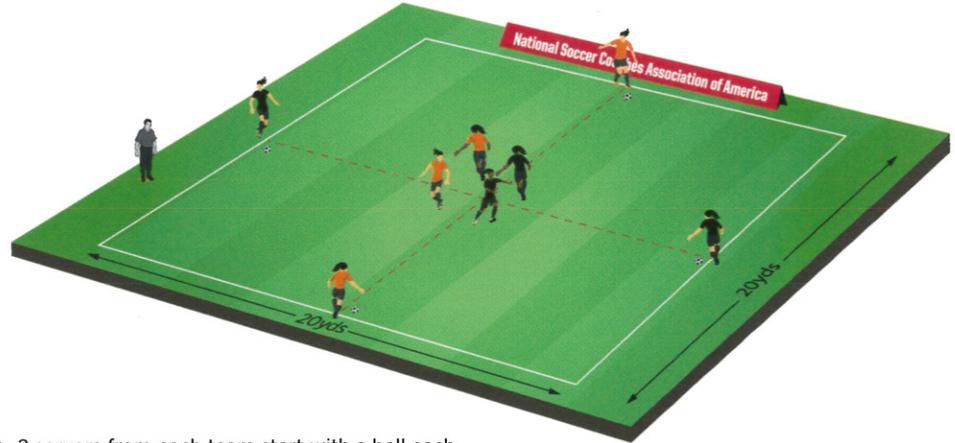
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

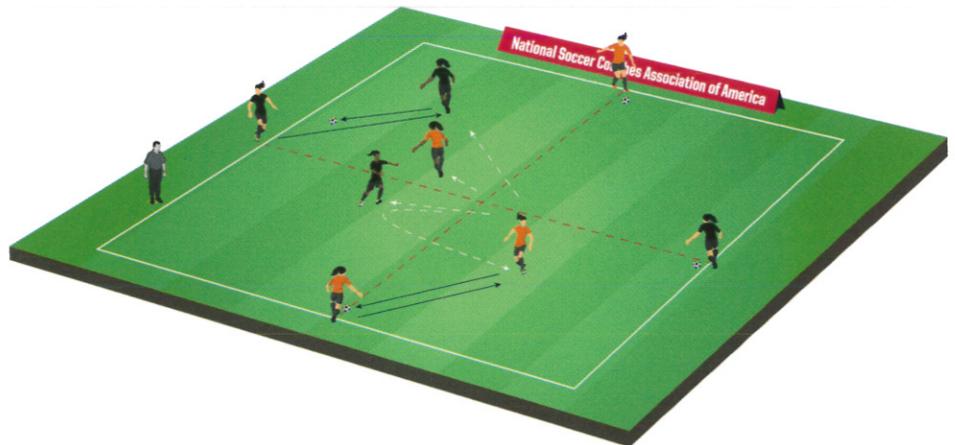
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: 1v1 attacking and defending, 1st defender and creating space.

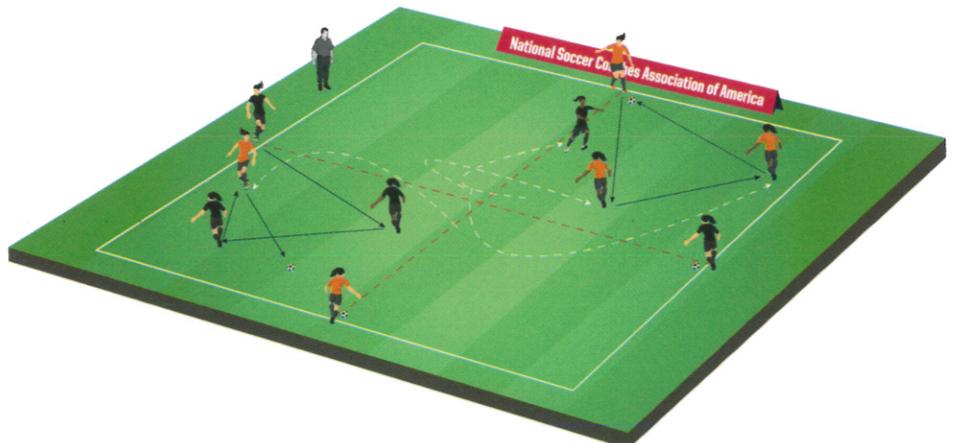
Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, controlling touch and defensive pressure.



- + 2 servers from each team start with a ball each.
- + 2 pairs of players in the center, each within their own area.
- + Orange is the attacker and black the defender in pair 1 and vice-versa in pair 2.



- + Pair 1 - the black attacker moves quickly to exchange passes with the black server. The orange defender is slow to close the space, but is in the same square. 1 point for black.
- + Pair 2 - the orange player makes a move and loses the black defender - 2 points to orange



- + An additional attacker is added to the center - now there are 2 games of 1v2.
- + Game 1 - the orange attackers exchange passes quickly before the defender is ready.
- + Game 2 - Orange defender intercepts the pass and plays to the orange server for 2 points.

# PASSING PAIRS

## WHY USE IT

Keeping basic passing activities fun and realistic is often a challenge. This practice incorporates short passing combinations between 2-3 players moving with and without the ball to create space.

## SET UP

20x20 yards. One ball per player.

## HOW TO PLAY

8-10 players dribble around the area, using different moves and ball mastery skills. A pair of players pass the ball, moving around the area with 2-3 touches maximum. The passing players must avoid hitting the dribbling players and their soccer balls. The dribbling move with a 'fluid motion' and cannot stand between the passing players. Passing players start with 5 points and each time contact is made they lose a point. Play for 2 minutes or until passing players lose 5 points. Rotate players. The pair with the highest score at the end of 2 minutes win. Progress the activity by adding multiple pairs of passers and make the activity directional - meaning, the passing pairs must travel across the area from side to side. If they manage to get across the area and stop the ball on the end line they gain a point. Keep moving back and forth for 2 minutes. In the final progression, the coach introduces a 5-8 yard channel. The dribbling players move through the channel from end to end. The passing players must play quick, adjusting their position forward and back to maintain a quick rhythm. How many consecutive passes can be made in 2 minutes?

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with players to recognize time and space, different weight of passes, protecting the ball and identifying clear passing opportunities.
- + Coaching tips - Adjust the number of players in the area to increase or decrease the chances of passing success.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Reduce the number of players in the area and instruct the dribbling players to travel across the area in one direction only.
- + More challenging: make the activity directional - passers must travel from side to side. Add a third passer to create triangles and limit touches.

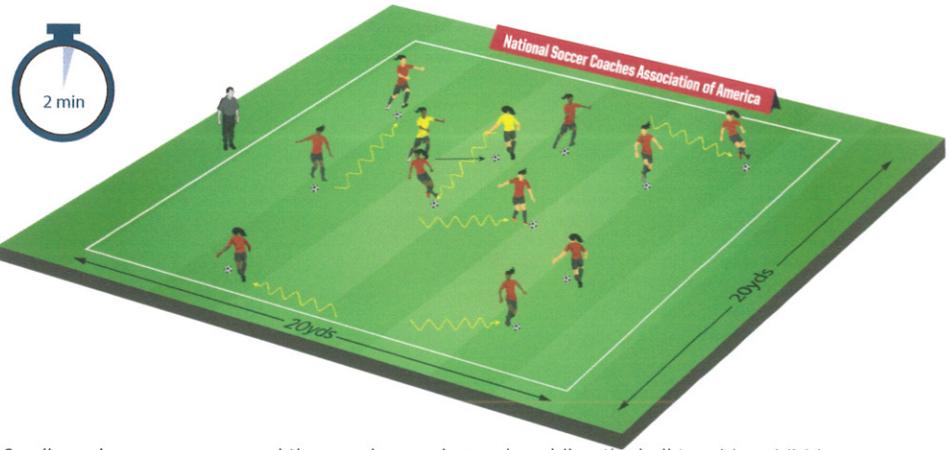
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 - 6-11 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, dribbling and creating space.

Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, controlling touch and dribbling basics.



- + 2 yellow players move around the area by passing and avoiding the ball touching dribblers.
- + Maintain 5+ Yards between the passing players.
- + The red players dribble randomly and on occasions across the line of the passing pair.



- + Add 2-3 more passing pairs.
- + The activity is now directional - moving side to side.
- + To score a point the passers must stop the ball on the side line - 2 touches only.



- + Change the game set-up, creating a channel down the center.
- + Passing players play across the channel and reds dribble down the channel.
- + Yellow players adjust their position back and forth to avoid dribbling players.

# CRISS CROSS TECHNICAL TRAINING

## WHY USE IT

Technical repetition for players in the first 3 stages of development can be demanding, exciting and enjoyable. In this activity players work in small groups to perform a variety of dribbling and passing routines against 1-3 other teams.

## SET UP

The area is 15x15 yards with cones placed halfway along each side of the square. 2 players start at each cone and work with the pair opposite. Each team has a ball.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective of this activity is for both teams to move the ball from one side of the area to the other avoiding a collision with the opponent in the center. One team is required to dribble the ball to within a yard of their teammates before exchanging the ball with a take-over move. The other team is allowed 3 touches only and must make a 'self-pass' before making a final pass to the player opposite. Each time the team transfers the ball from one end to the other they win a point and if the ball hits an opponent the team loses a point. Play for 1 minute and then switch the conditions so both teams have an opportunity to dribble and pass. Build up to 8 pairs playing 'criss-cross' patterns.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the dribbling players to take a firm first touch and then penetrate at pace and under control. The coach should also help the passing players to get their bodies into a good position and play a firm pass with the inside of the foot.
- + Coaching tips – Increasing the degree of challenge for attacking players does not necessarily have to involve defenders. In this activity the player's technique can be tested by adding more groups of players to the same space, changing the type of pass or dribble and reducing the space.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Keep the passing combinations simple, have both teams dribble or pass only and stick to 4 pairs of players.
- + More challenging: Stipulate the dribbler must take 10 touches before switching, add more groups, require a passing combination such as a double pass, insist on passes being made from halfway across the area, require the dribbler to perform a take-on move before exchanging and add conditions on the fly with the ball in play.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 1, 2 & 3 - 3-9 year old players

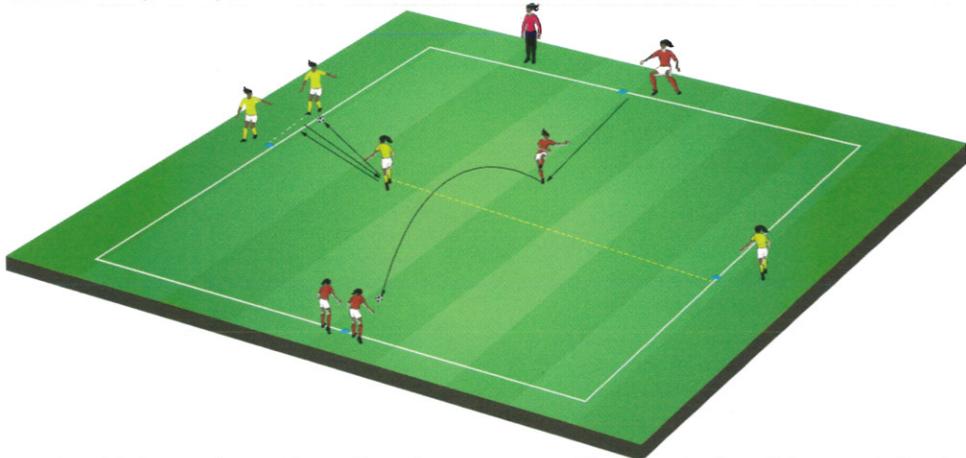
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, dribbling and creating space.

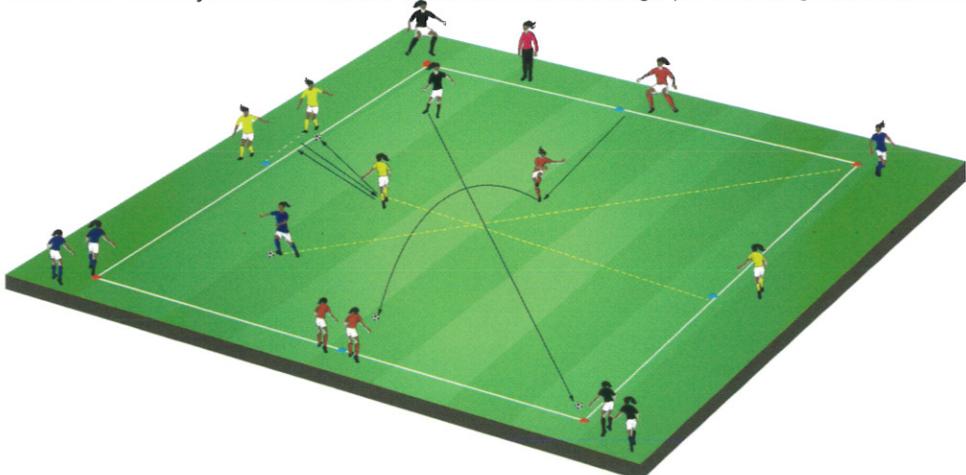
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and dribbling.



- + In the first sequence there are 2 teams of 4 players, each split into pairs facing each other 15 yards apart.
- + The red team must move the ball from one side to the other on the dribble avoiding the yellow team.
- + The yellow team is required to move across using only 3 touches. If the teams successfully complete their tasks they earn 1 point. Play the game for 60 seconds and then swap the conditions for both teams.



- + Keeping with the same layout, the coach now imposes new conditions to make the activity more challenging.
- + The yellow team dribbles across to within 4 yards of the other line before making a double pass.
- + The red team has only 2 touches to transfer the ball which results in longer passes on the ground or in the air.



- + In the final sequence the coach has added 2 new groups starting from the corners of the area.
- + The coach can decide whether to have all 4 groups perform the same technical challenge or assign a different condition for each group.

# NUMBERS PASSING

## WHY USE IT

A terrific unopposed introductory passing activity can be employed with equally great effect with 6 and 18 year old players. Intensity can be increased - fast!

## SET UP

20x20 yards. 8-10 players randomly space themselves in the area. The coach gives each player a number, i.e. 1, 2, 3 .... 9, 10. One ball starts with player 1.

## HOW TO PLAY

'Walk through' the activity with the players for 1-2 sequences. If needed, rehearse the activity by passing the ball with the hands using a basketball style chest pass. Pass the ball from one teammate to another in number order - i.e. 1 passes to 2, 2 to 3 etc. When 10 receives the pass from 9, 10 passes to 1 and the routine starts again. Begin with unlimited touches and then restrict to 2 touch or eventually, 1 touch. At first, expect players to stand flat-footed, unsure where to move. This is your teaching moment! In addition to coaching short and medium length passing, the coach can also teach movement and creating space. Instruct the players to move away from the ball after they have made a pass, look for space. With more advanced players have them 'look over their shoulder' to locate space with the first touch. Once the group has established a rhythm, instruct players they must run through a corner gate before re-entering the area - always watching the play as they run to the corner.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Passers should concentrate on first touch away from pressure and a firm pass on the ground to feet or space. Receiver should attempt to get in front of the passer to prevent the passers need to turn. Communication - call names or numbers.
- + Coaching tips - Freeze the play to allow players to see space - ask them to move to a better position and restart.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

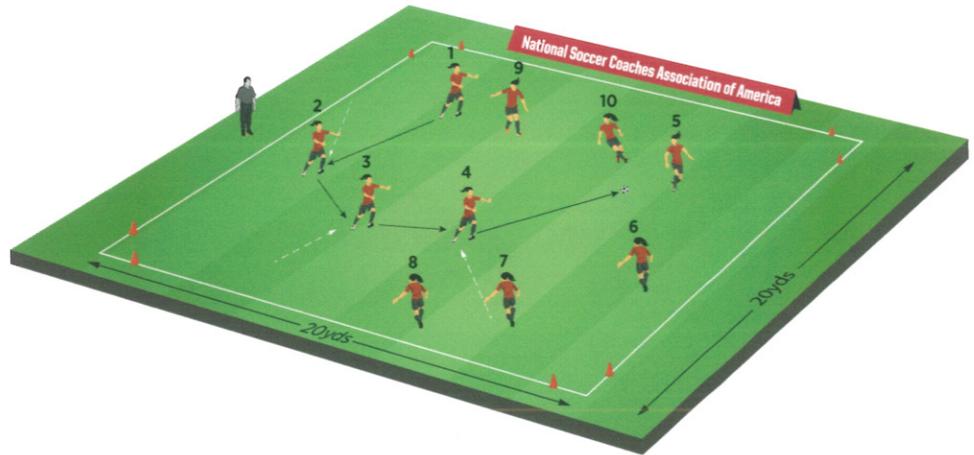
- + Less challenging: Pass the ball with the hands, reduce the number of players, increase the space.
- + More challenging: Add 2-3 balls, players run through corner gates, 1 touch quickens the pace, split the group into 2-3 teams working in the same area, add a double pass combination.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

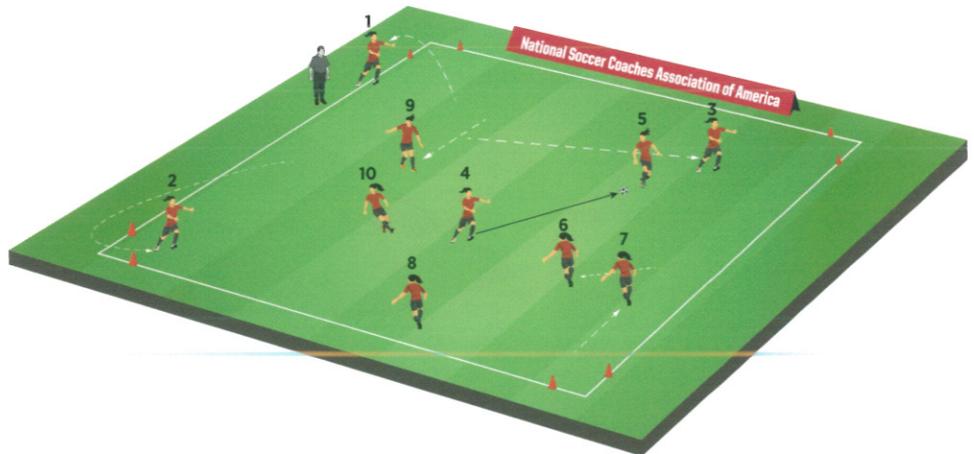
Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

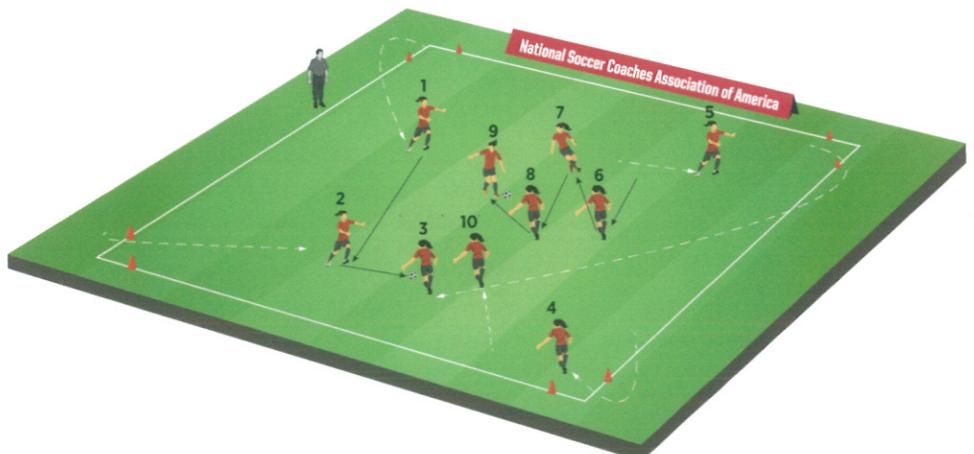
Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and communication.  
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.



- + Players are numbered 1-10.
- + Player 1 starts the activity with a pass to player 2.
- + Sequence continues and number 10 passes to 1.



- + Following a pass, the player runs through a corner gate before rejoining the activity.
- + Players should keep their eyes on the play as they run - 'don't turn your back.'
- + The receiver should predict where and how the teammate will receive the ball and work hard to get in front.



- + The coach can progress the activities in several ways, in this example a second ball has been added.
- + Players now need to work quickly to return to the area in time to receive the next pass.
- + Adding a 1 touch restriction puts even more pressure on the players.

# 1V1 TO 2V2 PASSING RHYTHM

## WHY USE IT

This activity is a series of passing and receiving exercises designed to provide players with plenty of technical repetitions in a fun and challenging format. These can be used as a warm-up or as active rest.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 16x16 yards area with 4 quadrants. In each quadrant 2 players start with a ball. The coach can set up more areas for larger numbers of players.

## HOW TO PLAY

This is a series of 3 activities that can be played in sequence or used on their own in a session. In the first activity players start approximately 4 yards apart and on the coach's command they pass back and forth. If a ball stops moving or leaves the area the pair must stop playing whilst the other teams play. Play in 1 minute intervals and any team still passing after 30 seconds gains 1 point and after 60 seconds - 2 points. To add variety insist on passes made with the laces or outside of the foot. In the second activity 3 cones are placed 2 yards apart in each quadrant to form a triangle. A player must pass through 2 sides of the triangle and then move to the vacant side to receive the next pass. The players must get into a 2 touch rhythm and the quicker they can play the better. A point is scored when the partner makes an errant pass or hits the cones with the ball. In the final activity the players play in pairs against another pair across 2 quadrants. Similar to tennis the players must play the ball into the opponents half whilst remaining in their half. If the ball stops moving the other team win a point and if the ball leaves the 'court' a point is won.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - To provide players with large quantities of passing and receiving opportunities to improve their technical competence.
- + Coaching tips - It is important that players move in-line with the ball, adjust their body positions to receive the ball and set up a pass. Help players to open their bodies to allow a fluid passing motion and encourage them to use the entire inside-surface of the foot.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Allow unlimited number of touches.
- + More challenging: Restrict the number of touches to 1-2, left or right foot only, 2 touches require - 1 on the left and one on the right and require both players to touch the ball in game 3.

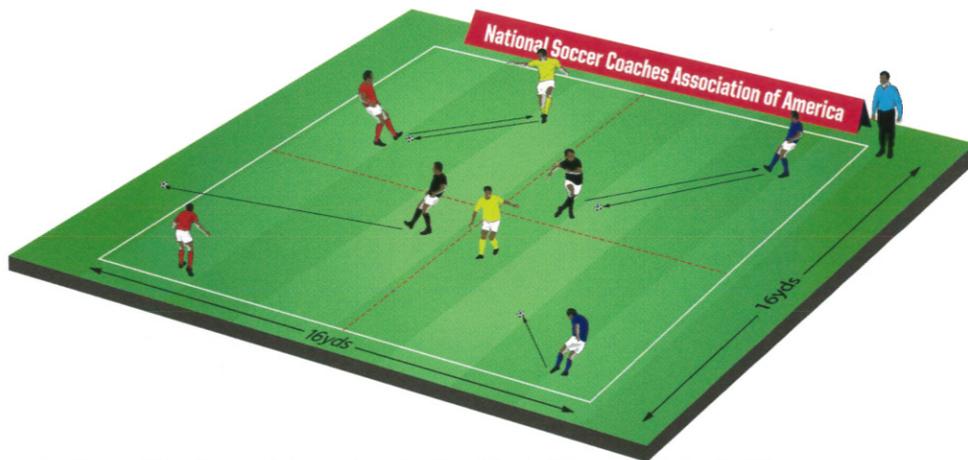
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2 & 3 - 6-11 year old players

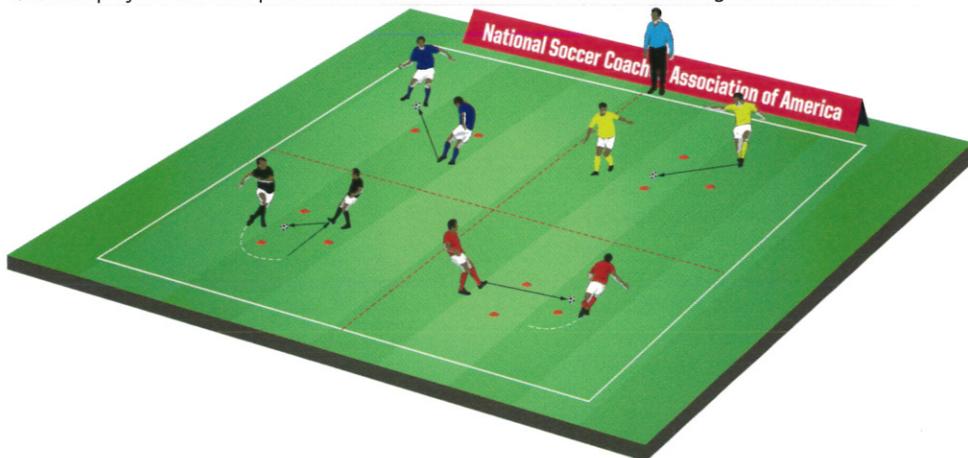
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving with the feet and creating space.

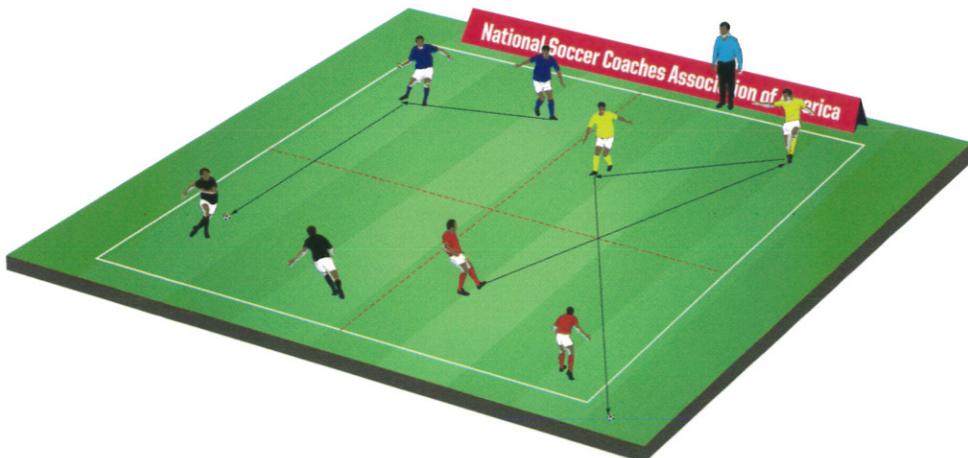
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.



- + In the first activity the coach has assigned pairs with a ball to each quadrant of the square.
- + On the command of "GO" the pairs start to pass back and forth and must keep the ball moving.
- + The black player makes a bad pass and the red partner is unable to prevent the ball going out. Simultaneously the blue player hits a soft pass and both teams have to wait as the other 2 games continue.



- + In the second diagram each pair is passing and moving around a triangle with 2 yards between the cones.
- + The black player makes a pass and moves quickly around to the vacant side of the triangle.
- + The partner cannot pass back through the same 2 sides as the previous pass.



- + In the final passing game pairs play against each other across 2 quadrants in a game similar to tennis.
- + The blue team make 1 touch passes and play into the blacks half. The blacks must not let the ball stop rolling.
- + The red and yellow teams exchange passes but the yellow pass is too firm and reds win a point.

# 2V1V1 PASSING AND SUPPORTING ANGLES

## WHY USE IT

This activity introduces young players to the 'timing' of a pass and an appreciation when to pass to feet and when to pass to space.

## SET UP

20x10 yards with a line sectioning the area into 2x10 yard squares. 2 attacking players stand at one end with a supply of balls. One defender stands on the center line and the other defender starts off the end line at the opposite end.

## HOW TO PLAY

One of the attacking players dribbles a ball and the other attacker supports. The first defender is restricted to the 1st square and attempts to win the ball. The attacker in possession of the ball must decide whether to dribble or pass to the team mate. Work with players on the timing of the support run and the release of the pass. In the first square there are no offsides, so the support player can run behind the defender and receive a pass behind the defender. When the first defender is beaten, the attackers enter the attacking half of the field. The 2nd defender can move into the area on the third touch by either attacker in the first sequence (the slower the attack the more time the defender has to confront the attackers higher up the field). The 1st defender cannot enter into the attacking half. If either defenders win possession, they can counter attack and attempt to score - creating a 2v2. With older players (stage 3+), position a coach/parent to enforce offsides, so attackers don't move too early into advanced positions.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with the attackers on their starting positions - using the width of the area ensures the defender must cover more ground. Discuss the role of the support player in providing a good angle of support - delaying the supporting run to allow more space in front for the partner to pass into. Introduce terms such as passing to the 'front foot' and 'back foot'.
- + Coaching tips - Be ready for a coaching moment to occur and then stop play, demonstrate, rehearse and then play.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Narrow the width.
- + More challenging: Add a 2nd defender in the attacking half to create 2v2 and potential for a 3v2 counter attack.

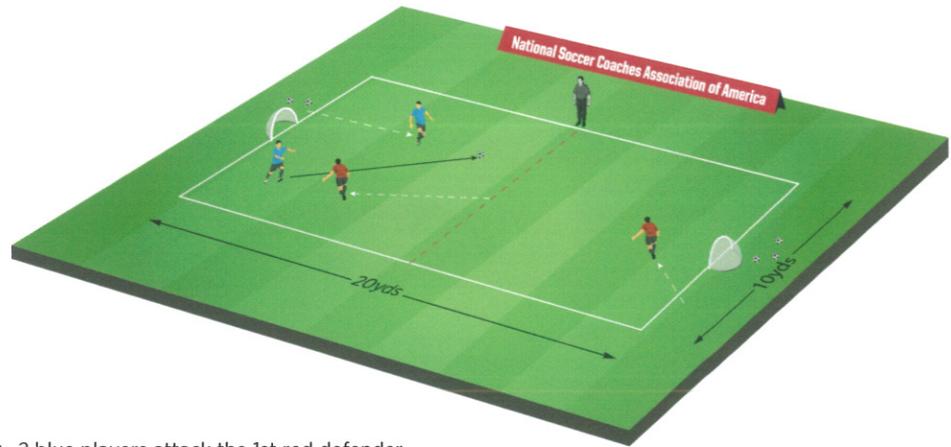
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 - 6-14 year old players

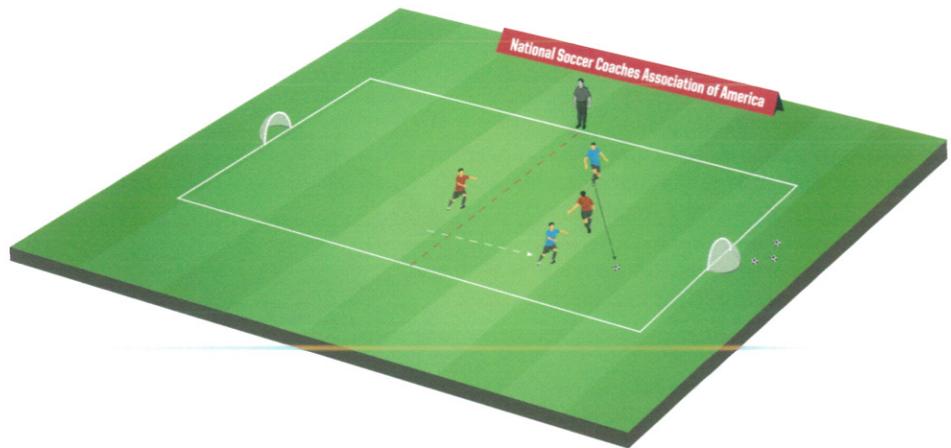
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, creating space and defending 1v1.

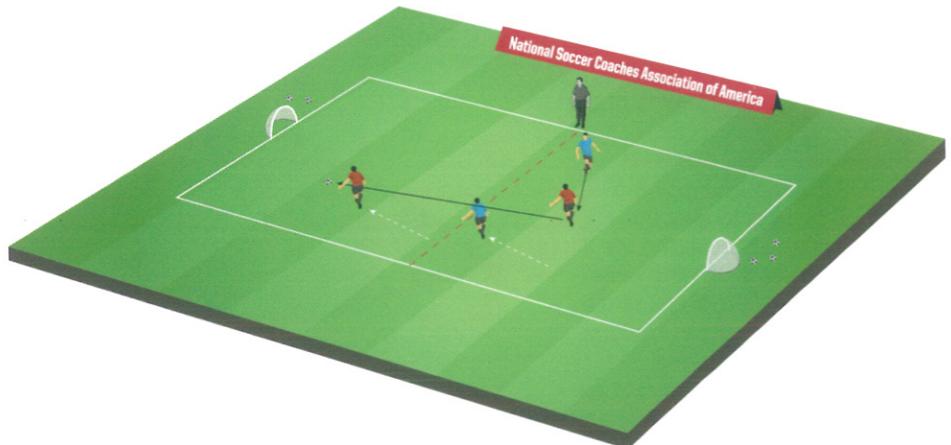
Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, controlling touch and defensive pressure.



- + 2 blue players attack the 1st red defender.
- + The red defender over commits towards the dribbling attacker and an early pass to space is on.
- + On the 3rd touch by either attacker, the 2nd defender starts to close the space.



- + The attackers manage to beat the 1st defender and then proceed to play 2v1 against defender 2.
- + The 2nd defender does not commit fully to either attacker and leaves space behind.
- + The support player delays the run and is able to beat the offside trap to run onto a pass behind.



- + A flat-square pass is intercepted by the red defender.
- + The red defender makes an early pass to his teammate before the blues can recover and defend the counter attack.

# ALL UP - ALL BACK 3V3

## WHY USE IT

This small sided game is a great way to reinforce previously learned attacking and defending concepts. The rules require players to support teammates in attack and recover quickly to defend.

## SET UP

25x15 yards. 3v3 with a small goal at each end. Training vests and a supply of balls at each end of the field.

## HOW TO PLAY

Play commences with one team taking a kick-off. Both teams attempt to score in the opponent's goal. To encourage players to support the attack, a goal is only counted if all the players from the attacking team are in the attacking half of the field when the ball crosses the goal line. Similarly, to encourage defenders to work back to prevent a goal, all defenders must be in the defensive half of the field when a goal is conceded. If a defender is caught in the attacking half when a goal is scored, the goal counts as 2. There are numerous attacking and defending concepts the coach can review with players. The rules/conditions favor communication between players, such as letting teammates know when all players are in the attacking half. Equally, the coach can suggest that attacking at pace may catch a defender or 2 over committed in the attacking end of the field. When the ball leaves the field, use the nearest ball and restart quickly. First to 5 points wins.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Adding the all-up and all-back conditions should create urgency in the players. Players will learn quickly to support the attack, but not over commit so there is no defensive cover.
- + Coaching tips - Using a points system is a good way to add emphasis to the main theme of the session.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

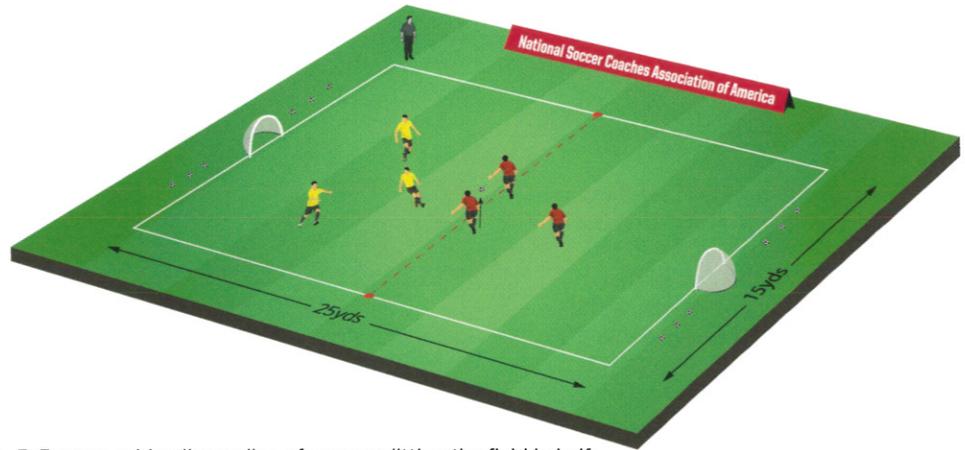
- + Less challenging: Increase the length of the field to give the attackers more space and more time to get over the halfway line. Reduce the length to make space easier to cover for the defenders.
- + More challenging: If a goal is scored and one or more attackers or defenders are in the other half, the 'lazy' players have to step off the field for the next sequence - leaving the team with players 'down'.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

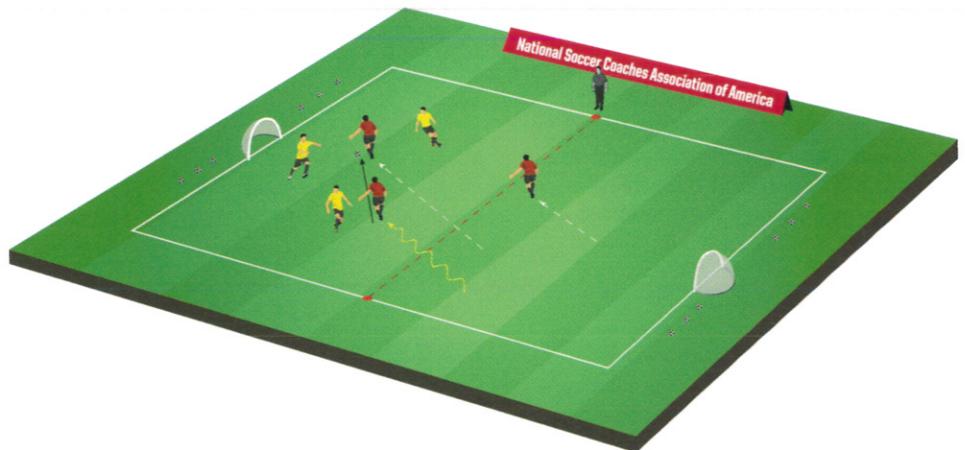
Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

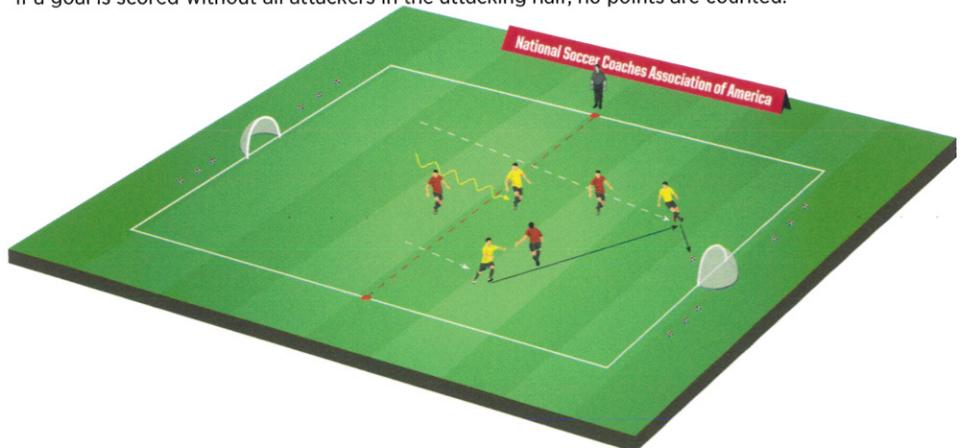
Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.  
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and 1v1 defending.



- + 3v3 game, with a line or line of cones splitting the field in half.
- + Spare balls are placed along both end lines, so quick restarts are possible.
- + Reds start with a kick off and attempt to attack the yellow team's goal.



- + The red's combine to create a shooting opportunity.
- + The red attacker keeps possession instead of shooting, because a red attacker is slow to enter the attacking half.
- + If a goal is scored without all attackers in the attacking half, no points are counted.



- + Yellows quickly counter attack and all 3 yellows enter the attacking half of the field.
- + One red defender is slow to recover into the defensive half.
- + Yellows score. The yellow team receive 2 points because the red player is caught in the wrong half.

# COUNTDOWN

## WHY USE IT

Countdown is a very popular game with the players as it is fast paced and exciting. As the number of players on both teams start to dwindle the importance of decision making increases.

## SET UP

The area is a 30x20 yards rectangle with a 3 yards end zone marked at both ends. Two teams of 6 players nominate a target player to stand in the opponents end zone and the remaining players spread out in between the zones. The coach stands on the sideline with a large supply of balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the game is to be the first team to have all players in the opponents end zone. To achieve that goal the players must combine passes with the target player. If the target player is able to control the ball and place their foot on top of the ball in the end zone, the player making the final pass joins the target player. If the ball leaves the area the coach restarts and makes a pass to the opposing team. Continue the sequence until the last player on either team makes the final pass to a target player and then play again.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – There are numerous attacking and defending competencies that a coach can focus on in this activity. Defensive compactness to prevent penetrating passes into the target players and movement by players to create width are just a couple of objectives.
- + Coaching tips – There are times in a training session the coach will just want to 'let the game be the teacher'. Once players understand the rules and objectives, give them the responsibility to work on their own tactics. Typically, discussions will occur on who to start as the target player and which player the team wants to be the last to pass.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start with 2-3 target players to provide more room in between the zones at the start.
- + More challenging: Add a second ball, insist on a passing combination before passing to the target, introduce a touch restriction, if a ball leaves the field the team must send back a target player and change the shape of the field to create different challenges.

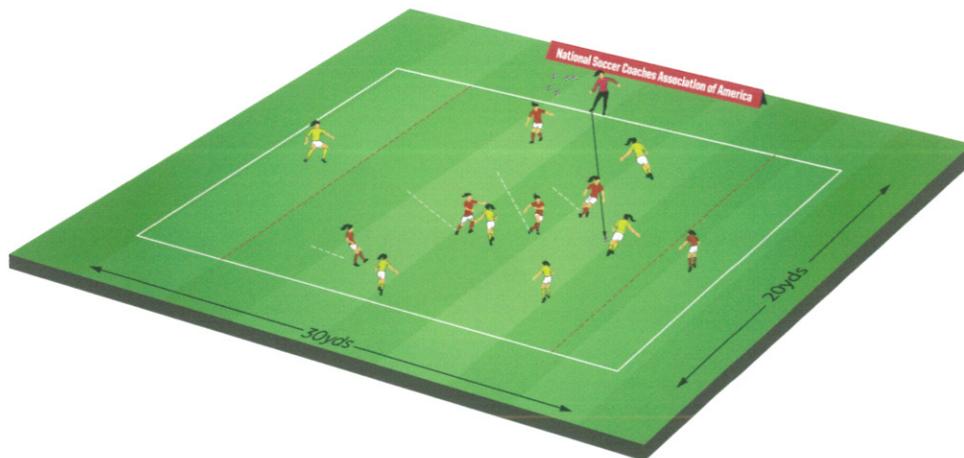
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

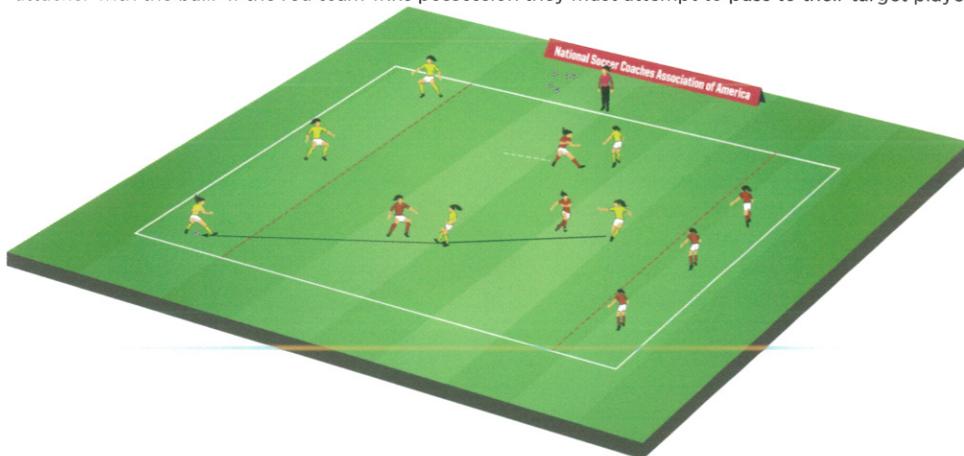
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, support and defensive pressure.

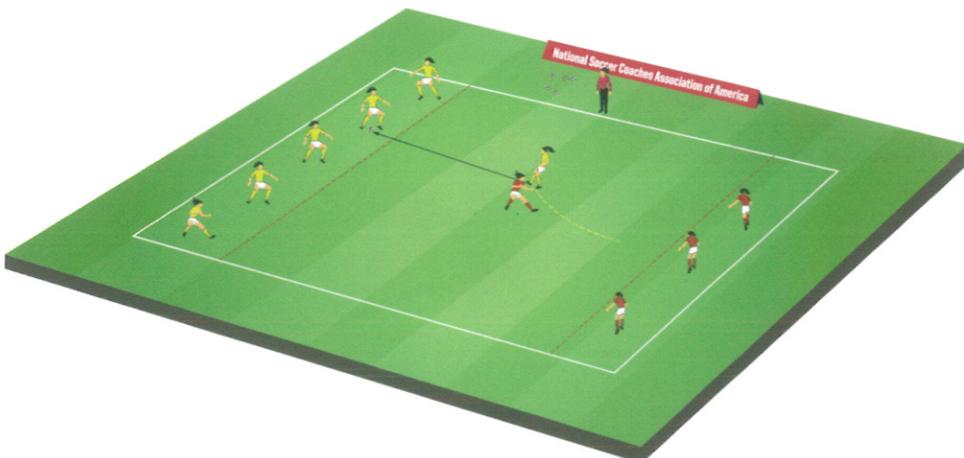
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and 1v1 defending.



- + The coach passes to the yellow team who have 5 players in-between 2 end zones.
- + The yellow team must attempt to pass the ball into a yellow target player standing in the red team's zone.
- + The red team applies immediate pressure with the 2 nearest defenders closing tightly around the yellow attacker with the ball. If the red team wins possession they must attempt to pass to their target player.



- + The game has progressed and both teams have successfully sent 3 players to the end zone.
- + The yellow team has possession and the coach has insisted on a passing combination before a pass can be made into the end zone by either team. The yellow team achieves this goal and a successful pass is made.



- + The excitement builds as both teams trade players into the end zone.
- + Inevitably the game rests with the last player from each team in the center of the area.
- + A 1v1 duel ensues and the yellow player dribbles past the red defender before making the winning pass.

# DRIBBLE THE GAUNTLET

## WHY USE IT

This is a small sided game providing an opportunity for 1v1 attacking and defending, dribbling and take on moves, short passing and creating space.

## SET UP

25x25 yards, with a smaller square 8x8 yards in the center. 2 defenders are restricted to the center square and attempt to prevent players dribbling through. 3 teams of 3 players attempt to dribble the gauntlet, with 2 target players on the perimeter of the large square and 1 attacker between the large square and the smaller square. Each team has a ball.

## HOW TO PLAY

A target player on the perimeter of the large square makes a firm pass along the ground to the feet of the attacker inside the area. With a good positive first touch, the attacker penetrates the 'gauntlet' square on the dribble with pace. The 2 defenders attempt to win possession of the ball and make a pass to the coach on the sideline for a point. If an attacker can dribble through the square and make a pass to the other perimeter player, the team win a point. The perimeter player making the first pass into the attacker, moves into the area to receive the next pass from the other perimeter player. The attacker moves to the perimeter as soon as the ball is passed to the 2nd perimeter player. All 3 teams work at the same time to outnumber the defenders. First to 10 points and then rotate the defenders.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Help players to recognize the attacking space and look for the position of the defenders. Players should use different dribbling speeds and take on moves to beat defenders.
- + Coaching tips - Utilizing an activity with multiple games occurring at one time is a great way to create challenges for the attackers and defenders.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: To establish the rhythm, start with the ball in the players hands. Start with no defenders or defenders kneeling.
- + More challenging: Attackers losing possession become defenders and the defenders take the attackers place (hold pinnies for easy transfer). Allow players to play random patterns as they gain confidence.

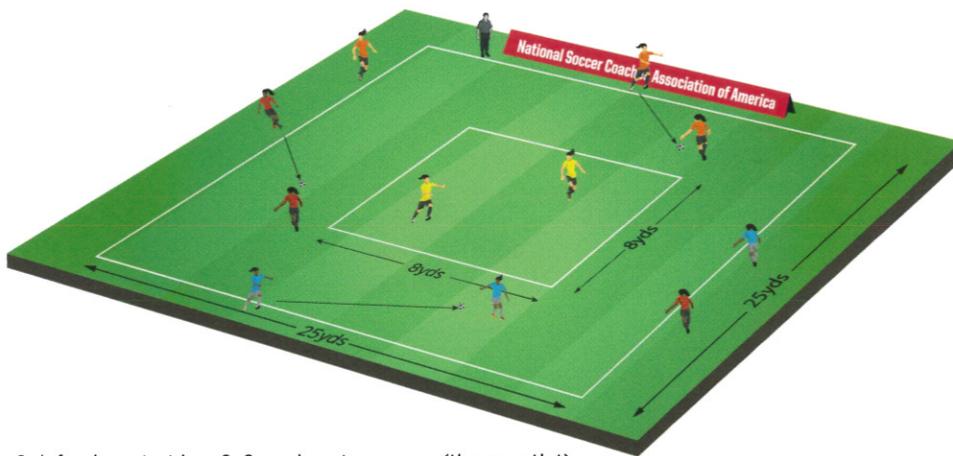
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing and receiving, 1v1 defending and creating space.

Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, movement off the ball & defending pressure.



- + 2 defenders start in a 8x8 yard center square (the gauntlet).
- + 3 teams of 3 attempt to combine and win points by dribbling through the gauntlet.
- + 2 target players start on the perimeter and 1 attacker between the 2 squares,



- + Once the perimeter player makes a pass the perimeter player enters the area for the next pass.
- + The attacker dribbles through the area attempting to avoid the defenders.
- + If a defender intercepts a ball, he/she must attempt to pass to the coach for a point.



- + Once an attacker has successfully penetrated the gauntlet, a pass is made to the other perimeter player.
- + The attacker immediately sprints to the outside and becomes a perimeter player.
- + The new attacker creates space and receives a pass from the target. Play first to 10 wins and rotate.

# SQUARES

## WHY USE IT

As kids, we spent more time playing squares than any other game. It is easy to set-up, the players can self regulate and it is tremendous fun!

## SET UP

10x10 yards. The tighter the area the better to create quick feet and fast reactions. 8-12 players start in the area with a few extra balls around the outside to keep the game going. Ideally the area should be lined - if not, go to the corner of a lined field and use cones close together to mark the other 2 lines.

## HOW TO PLAY

It is all-against-all. Last player left in the area is the winner. The game is fast pace, but to keep everyone active have some extra balls so eliminated players can practice juggling and ball skills. Introduce the rules gradually: 1) Players are allowed only 1 touch before another person touches the ball - 2 or more touches and the player is out. 2) The player touching the ball last before it leaves the area is out ... unless ... 3) A player did not make a reasonable effort to keep the ball within the lines. 4) If a player is 'nutmegged' - a ball played through the legs - out! 5) If the ball stops - nearest player is out. 6) If a ball is played off the ground and is caught - the player chipping the ball is out ... unless 7) the player attempting to catch the ball drops it and then the player attempting to catch is out. Play the next ball in quickly to keep the flow going.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Quick feet, movement around the area, being ready and 'on the toes', forceful and accurate passes. Players that just stand are easy targets and will get knocked out early.
- + Coaching tips - This is a great 'activation' activity at the beginning of the session when the players arrive at practice. It can also be used as 'active rest' between activities.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start with less players in the area. When 4-5 players are knocked out, start a 2nd game in an adjacent square to keep all players engaged.
- + More challenging: Reduce area size. Add conditions: left foot only, alternate feet on each touch, must be 2 touch, 2 teams and add a goal - after 3 touches a player can score and a player eliminated from the game rejoins.

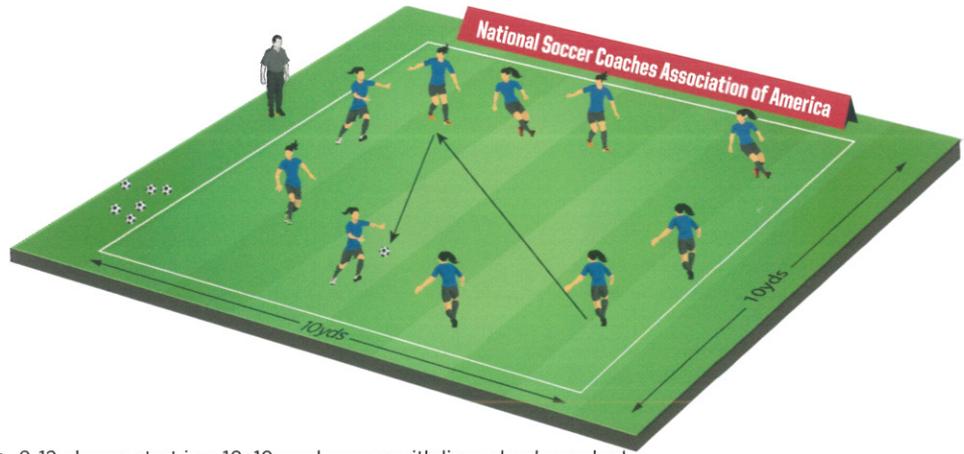
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing, receiving and creating space.

Top 3 competencies: Passing over short distances, controlling touch and movement off the ball.



- + 8-12 players start in a 10x10 yard square with lines clearly marked.
- + Coach introduces the rules gradually.
- + Spare balls on the sideline to keep the game moving.



- + A player is 'nutmegged' and is consequently eliminated.
- + Eliminated players must leave the square immediately and practice juggling.
- + Encourage players to move around the area. Standing on the sideline makes an easy target.



- + A ball chipped into the air can be caught and the passer is eliminated.
- + Play until there is a winner.
- + Add rules as players become more efficient.

# BLOCK AND POKE TACKLING TECHNIQUES

## WHY USE IT

Teaching young players the correct tackling techniques is crucial. Knowing how and when to employ the block tackle, poke tackle and slide tackle takes repetition and reinforcement and rarely receives sufficient time the techniques require.

## SET UP

25x15 yards. 2 teams of 3-5 players in training vests. 2 small goals at both ends and a large supply of balls to ensure maximum 'on-task' time.

## HOW TO PLAY

In the first sequence, 2 players stand facing each other in the center of the playing area with a ball between their feet. The players place the same non-kicking foot on opposite sides of the ball and their hands on each other's shoulders (this prevents players taking a run-up before learning block tackling technique). The other players stand on the sideline waiting to come onto the field - one team responsible for bringing on a ball. The block tackle technique is typically used when the attacker is attempting to go past a defender. Timing is critical - the defender using the inside of the foot to 'block' the ball and force the ball to 'squirt out' in favor of the defender. On the command of 'GO', both players forcefully block the ball. Insist on no kicking through the ball to avoid injury. As soon as the ball clears the legs, players break free and play 1v1. To practice the poke tackle, the coach passes a 2nd ball to either player. The poke tackle is used to disrupt an attacker's dribble when the attacker is in front of the defender. The defender reaches forward and pokes the ball with the toe, keeping a low center of gravity whilst maintaining balanced.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Provide players with repetition and reinforcement of the techniques in an opposed environment.
- + Coaching tips - Break down the technique into 'parts'. Demonstrate the position of the non-kicking foot, the body position and the use of the inside of the foot or toe.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start the activity with players joined with hands on each others shoulders.
- + More challenging: Allow defenders to step into the block tackle, play multiple games at once, and add a points system to create competition.

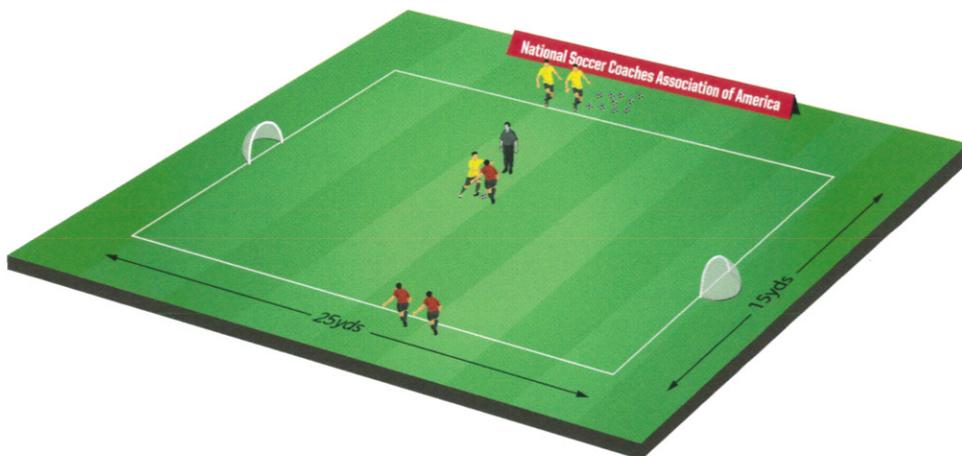
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 2, 3 - 6-11 year old players

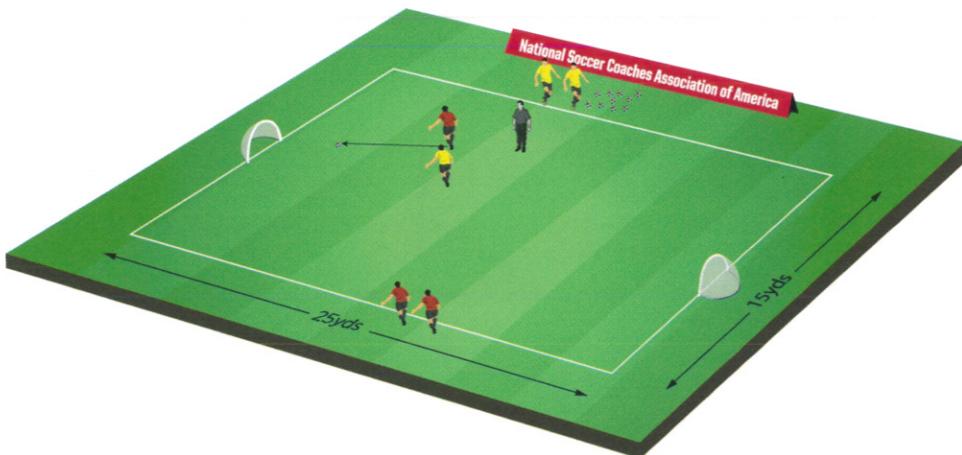
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: 1v1 Defending, defensive pressure and tackling technique.

Top 3 competencies: Poke Tackle, Block Tackle and defensive stance.



- + 1v1 in the center with a ball between the 2 players.
- + The coach is close by to ensure the correct technique and to minimize the chance of injury.
- + Players start with their hands on each others shoulders.



- + On the command of 'GO' play commences.
- + Players make a block tackle and release each other as the ball squirts out.
- + Invariably the best block tackling technique leads to winning the ball.



- + As players become more competent, set up 3 pairs across the grid - back to back.
- + A ball is placed between the player's shoulder blades and on the shout of 'GO', players spin around.
- + As the ball drops, the players use a block or poke tackle to win possession.



# BECOMING A BETTER COACH STARTS WITH MEMBERSHIP

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National Soccer Coaches  
Association of America

## STAGE 3 - ADOLESCENCE/EARLY PUBERTY (9-11 YEARS OLD)

This is the beginning of pre-adolescence. Children begin to 'spread out' as their rate of development accelerates. Girls in particular start to physically mature quicker than boys and this growth surge can lead to awkward performance, particularly on tasks requiring fine motor movements. As friendships are developing and players are becoming more reliant on their peers it is important for team selection to be handled sensitively. The reason why so many athletes plateau during the later stages of their careers is primarily because of an over-emphasis on competition instead of training during this important period in their development.

### DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- This is a crucial time for developing advanced competency in basic techniques and this platform allows for the introduction of more advanced skills.
- Some basic tactical appreciation can also be introduced.
- Commence aerobic capacity training at stage 3, prior to the adolescent growth spurt, also known as Peak Height Velocity
- Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.
- It is also very important that children are encouraged to take part in unstructured play and other sport participation is encouraged.

### KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 3

Physically	Psychological/Social	Cognitive/Mental
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Heart size is increasing in relation to body size.</li> <li>2. The players ability to perform anaerobically (high intensity and short duration movements) is limited due to slow development of anaerobic energy system.</li> <li>3. The players aerobic system (activities lasting for durations of 30 seconds plus) is not as efficient as older players.</li> <li>4. Large muscle groups are more defined than small muscle groups.</li> <li>5. Extreme heat and cold affects players rapidly.</li> <li>6. Players develop balance due to changes in the functionality of the inner ear.</li> <li>7. Developments in the nervous system facilitate the development of strength.</li> <li>8. Onset of puberty in females results in breast and hip-width development impeding performance and fall behind late developers.</li> <li>9. Early developing males are bigger and stronger than late developers and often experience success.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Individual need for attention and 'showmanship' is common.</li> <li>2. Self confidence and self awareness is developing through peer group experiences.</li> <li>3. Structured environments provide comfort.</li> <li>4. Players generally like consistency in approach and application of rules, etc.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attention span continues to increase.</li> <li>2. Players still prefer to learn by doing – players can become impatient quickly.</li> <li>3. Players learn by repetition.</li> <li>4. A predominant learning style begins to surface – most children learn by doing</li> <li>5. Language is not fully developed so players find it hard to articulate fully.</li> </ol>