

### DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS TRANSLATED TO COACHING PLAYERS IN STAGE 3

With appropriate coaching and focus on fundamental movement and basic soccer skills at Stage 1 and Stage 2, the performance of players at Stage 3 start to resemble more traditional soccer that we witness adults and older youth play. A player in possession will be thinking of passing to a team mate and will understand the need to support in attack and defense. Players will have greater awareness for the team, allowing coaches to develop simple tactics involving small groups and units. However, coaches must not abandon individual skill development and this focus must continue to take precedent over team tactics.

#### TRANSLATED TO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THIS MEANS

1. Players can perform lower intensity activity for at least an hour.
2. Speed and endurance activities should be included to train and enhance the development of the energy systems.
3. Girls – be conscious that girls going through puberty are more susceptible to drop out so be patient and provide plenty of encouragement.
4. Boys – early developers will dominate other players by virtue of their size and speed. Ensure that evaluations are based on several factors including execution of technique and understanding the game.
5. Players at this stage in their development cannot maintain exercise intensities or durations that players in the next stage can.
6. Technical development must form a large focus of training and players should be encouraged to practice at home informally and skills such as juggling and 'freestyle' moves should be encouraged.
7. Warm-up activities are important to raise body temperature and heart rate.
8. Players must be encouraged to drink plenty of fluids prior to practices/games and they must replenish lost fluids during and after activity.
9. Correct technique must be emphasized to complement the development of neural pathways.
10. Sessions should be progressed into small sided games/activities – 2 v 1 and 3 v 2 with a neutral player playing for the team in possession is an excellent ways to introduce introductory tactics.
11. Sessions can follow a theme but activities should be changed regularly to maintain interest.
12. Encourage and reward creativity in practice and games.
13. Different learning styles must be accommodated, so different coaching methodologies should be employed.
14. Praise and reward effort and create many opportunities for success.
15. Positive coaching focusing on strengths promotes confidence and self esteem.
16. Set goals and high expectations for all players.
17. Continue to encourage players to engage in unstructured physical play
18. Players should be working on flexibility, speed, endurance and strength. Strength activities should be using their own body weight, Swiss Balls and Medicine Balls.

# ACTIVITIES LISTING FOR STAGE 3: PLAYERS 9-11 YEARS OLD

## 69 SMALL SIDED GAME WITH CROSSING

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and creating space.

## 70 BUILD UP ATTACK 2V1 TO 6V5

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short/medium distances, creating space and passing combinations.

## 71 5 MINUTES TO WIN IT

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and creating space.

## 72 SHOOTING GAME FOR POINTS

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and shooting.

## 73 WORLD CUP 3V3

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and defending.
- + Top 3 competencies: Attacking 1v1, beating and escaping an opponent and support.

## 74 CREATING SPACE WITH SIMILAR AND OPPOSITE MOVEMENTS

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Combination play, creating space as an individual/small group and passing.
- + Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, movement off the ball and defending pressure.

## 75 PASSING PATTERNS 5V0 TO 6V1

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Combination play, creating space as an individual/small group and passing.
- + Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, movement off the ball and defending pressure.

## 76 PASSING AND CREATING SPACE WARM-UP

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and communication.

## 77 CENTER MIDFIELD LINK-UP AND FINISHING 3V2

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and link play.

## 78 CREATING SPACE WITH MOVEMENT AND COMBINATIONS 6V3

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and defending.

## 79 DEFENDING IN PAIRS AND 3'S - 2V5 TO 3V5

- + Stages 3, 4 - 9-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

## 80 DEFENDING IN PAIRS AND 3'S OVERLOAD

- + Stages 2, 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

## 81 DELAYING THE ATTACK 1V1 TO 2V2

- + Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

## 82 RUSH GOALIES 2V2 TO 3V3

- + Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

## 83 ROCK SOLID DEFENDING 3V5

- + Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

## 84 6 BALL PASSING

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over a short distances, combination play and creating space.

## 85 ATTACKING COMBINATIONS CLOSE TO GOAL 1V1-2V1

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and shooting technique.

## 86 ONE TOUCH SHORT PASSING COMBINATIONS

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

## 87 2V1 TO 7V5 OVERLAPS

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

## 88 ONE-UP AND ONE-DOWN

- + Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
- + Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

# SMALL SIDED GAME WITH CROSSING

## WHY USE IT

3rd stage of development is a good time to introduce crossing from wide positions. Once players have demonstrated a level of passing proficiency over short and medium distances, the coach can now work with players to deliver a ball centrally whilst on the move.

## SET UP

The area is 40x30 yards with an appropriate size goal at both ends. Use cones to mark a 5 yard wide channel along the length of one side and a few markers to create a halfway line. Goalkeepers are optional and there are 4 teams of pairs.

## HOW TO PLAY

The game commences with 2 players in the wide channel - 1 servicing each half of the field. The wide players start in the defensive half and run into the attacking half once the ball is played. A pair of players start in each half as defenders and 1 pair starts in one half of the field as the attackers. The coach passes a ball to the attackers. The defenders in the same half as the attackers cannot intercept or apply any pressure. The attackers combine to release a pass to the wide player in the opposite half of the field. The combination could be a simple pass or a combination such as a wall pass, double pass or overlap. One wide player dribbles at game speed down the channel unopposed and simultaneously, the attackers enter the other half and make runs towards the goal. The defenders play live as soon as the attackers enter their half of the field. The wide player crosses the ball. If a goal is scored or the ball leaves the playing area, the coach restarts with a pass to the 2 players who were defending to attack the other end. If the defenders win possession, they can attack the other end.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – In a 5v5 environment, work with full backs to support the attack from wide and learn to cross off the dribble.
- + Coaching tips – The coach should carefully plan the players starting positions to introduce a level of game realism. Small sided games in Stage 3 is a good time to discuss positional roles. This activity is the start of functional training as forwards and midfield players combine.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: No goalkeepers.
- + More challenging: Remove defensive restrictions wide and add players.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

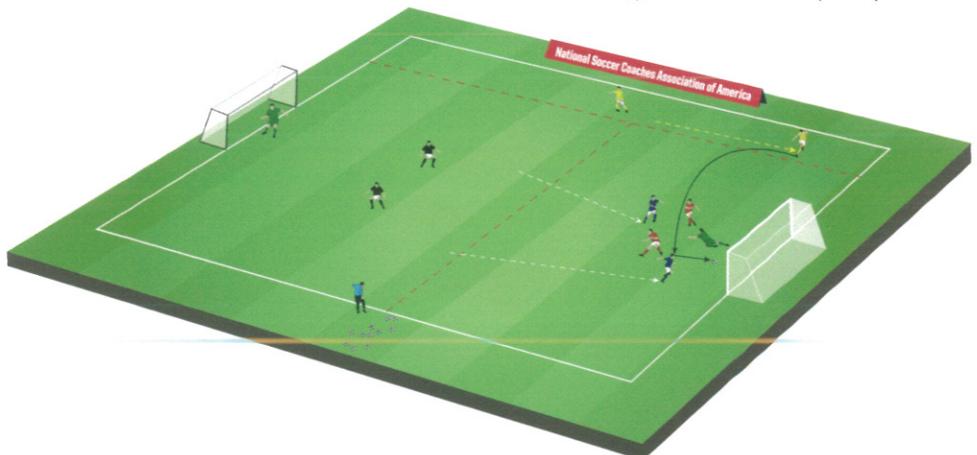
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and creating space.

Top 3 competencies: Passing over medium distances, receiving and penetrating runs.



- + The coach serves the ball to 2 attackers starting in the defensive half of the field.
- + The 2 yellow wide players also start in the defensive half and move into the attacking half as the ball is played.
- + The red defenders wait for the blue attackers to enter the attacking half and then can pick up runs.



- + The yellow wide player has dribbled at game speed along the channel unopposed and served far post.
- + The blue attackers make straight runs near and far post. The coach can work with different attacking runs.
- + The defenders are caught under the ball and as a result a goal is scored.



- + The coach immediately serves a new ball to the red players who are now attacking the black team.
- + The blue players and the wide yellow players jog back into the starting position for the next attack.
- + The red players make a double pass combination in midfield before passing wide to the other wide player.

# SHOOTING GAME FOR POINTS

## WHY USE IT

This is an extremely fun shooting game to play and as players become more familiar with the rules they will start to develop their own team tactics.

## SET UP

The activity is played at one end of an appropriately sized field in and around the penalty box. 2-3 teams can play with 3-4 people on each team. A goalkeeper protects the goal and is not on any particular team. The balls are placed in the net and are served by the keeper.

## HOW TO PLAY

The goalkeeper starts by kicking/throwing the ball in the air and into space outside the penalty box. The players from the 2 attacking teams must be outside the area when the ball hits the ground. If any player is caught inside the area when the ball hits the ground, a penalty is awarded to the other team. The two teams must compete to score. If one team plays the ball into the box and that team scores, the player that scored must take a penalty kick to win 1 point. Failure to convert the penalty results in zero points. If a goal is scored from outside the area, a penalty must be taken and a successful spot kick scores 2 points. Again, missing a penalty results in no points. A headed goal followed by a successful penalty equals 3 points and a penalty scored after a player is too slow to leave the penalty box equals 1 point. First team to 7 points wins. If a ball is played into the penalty box by the red team, only the red team can score. The blue team must recycle the ball outside the box to be able to score.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Encourage the players to take the first opportunity they have to shoot and stress the importance of following up rebounds.
- + Coaching tips – This is a realistic game-like activity to practice penalty kicks. The penalty follows immediately after open play so there are no lines of players waiting to take their shot.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Don't employ the rule that all players have to exit the area by the first bounce of the ball. Play without a goalkeeper.
- + More challenging: Limit the number of touches players can take in the box to encourage faster shooting and ball movement. Allow players only 10 seconds to take the penalty and if they fail to shoot in time they miss the opportunity to score points.

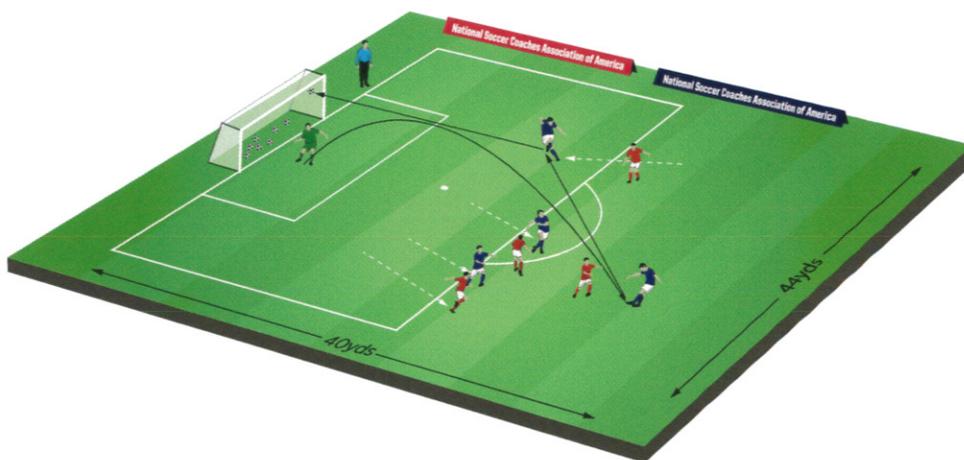
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

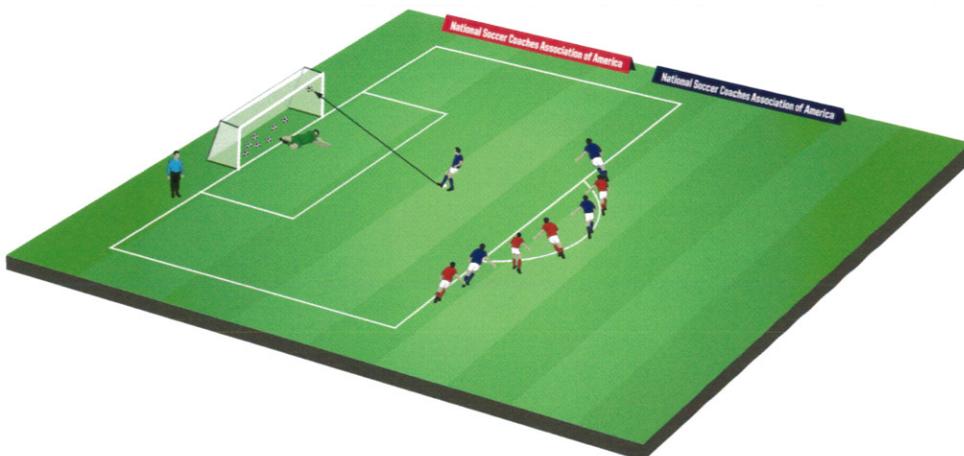
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Crossing, combination play and shooting.

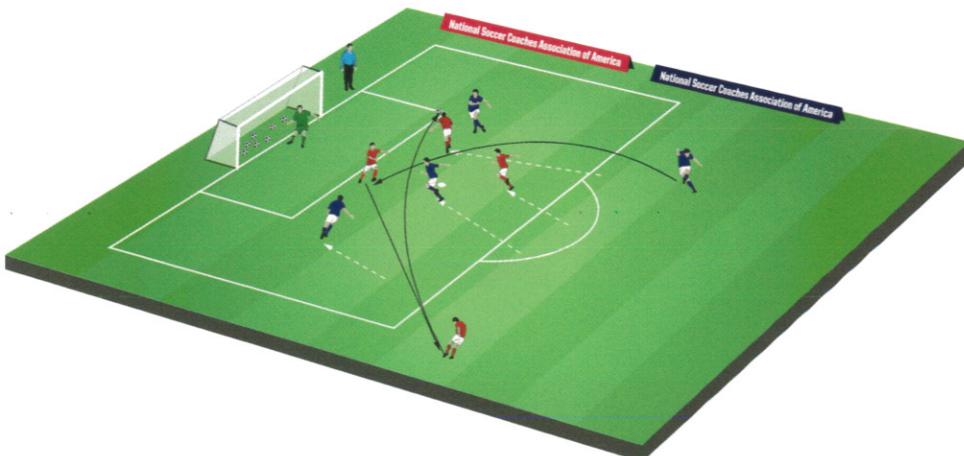
Top 3 competencies: Passing short and medium distances, shooting technique and movement.



- + The goalkeeper passes the ball in the air and beyond the edge of the penalty area.
- + The blues get to the ball first and a pass is made into the path of the blue attacker in the penalty box.
- + The reds are slow to react and the blue attacker scores.



- + The player scoring from open play quickly places the ball on the penalty spot and all other players retreat.
- + The player drives the ball into the top corner.
- + One point is scored for converting the penalty following a goal from inside the penalty box.



- + In this sequence the cross by blues is intercepted by the red defender.
- + Red's transition to the attack and are required to make a pass outside the area to be able to score.
- + A ball is played to a red player outside the box and a cross is made to the head of an attacker.

# WORLD CUP 3V3

## WHY USE IT

This is a challenging and high intensity game that can be used equally effectively as a warm-up and concluding activity. The number of players can be adapted from 1v1 to 5v5 depending on the coach's objectives.

## SET UP

30x20 yards area with appropriately sized goals at each end. In this example there are 4 teams of 3 players with a goalkeeper at each end. The coach is positioned centrally and is responsible for restarting the games from the sideline.

## HOW TO PLAY

2 teams take the field and the coach serves a ball to one of the teams to start a 3v3 game. The other 2 teams line up next to the coach waiting to be called upon. The game is winner stays on, so the team conceding must exit the field immediately as the coach invites another team to enter the playing area. The transition of teams must be fast and immediately the coach feeds a ball into start a new game. The team that scored continues playing as other teams rotate into the game. If the ball goes out of bounds, restart the game with a kick in from the coach. The coach can add a number of additional challenges to one or both teams. For example, the next goal cannot be scored by the same person. Another condition could be the team coming on have unlimited touches, but the team that scored must play 2 touch. The coach can vary the conditions to meet the objectives of the session.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - If the defensive team transitions quickly from the sideline and is organized, be patient and possess the ball.
- + Coaching tips - At Stage 3, the coach can start to discuss with players different attacking objectives and strategies when playing against an organized or disorganized defense. The more organized the defense the greater need to maintain positive possession of the ball and use width and depth.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging - Do not impose too many restrictions and conditions to begin. The coach may also like to send different numbers onto the field to create numbers up for one team.
- + More challenging - Add conditions as the game progresses. a) limited touches for one or both teams, b) if a team takes too long to get onto the field, the team is replaced immediately, c) encourage the keeper to step forward and support the attack as the modern game requires.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

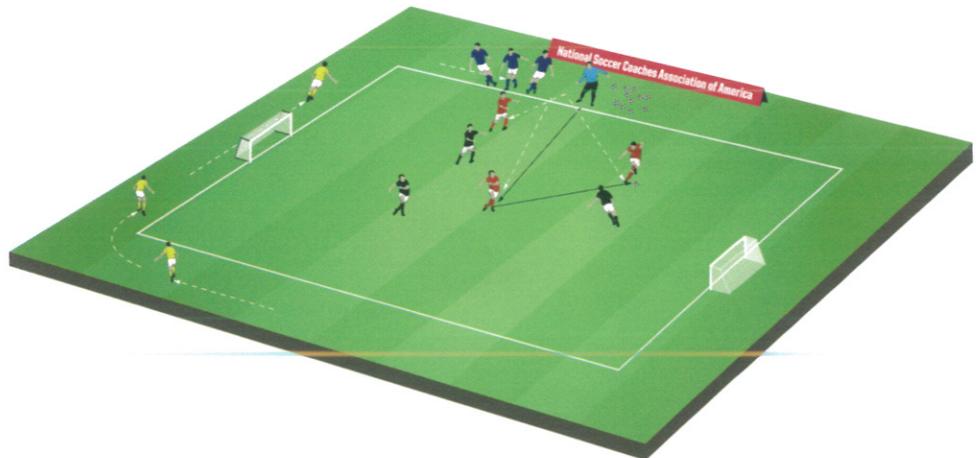
Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

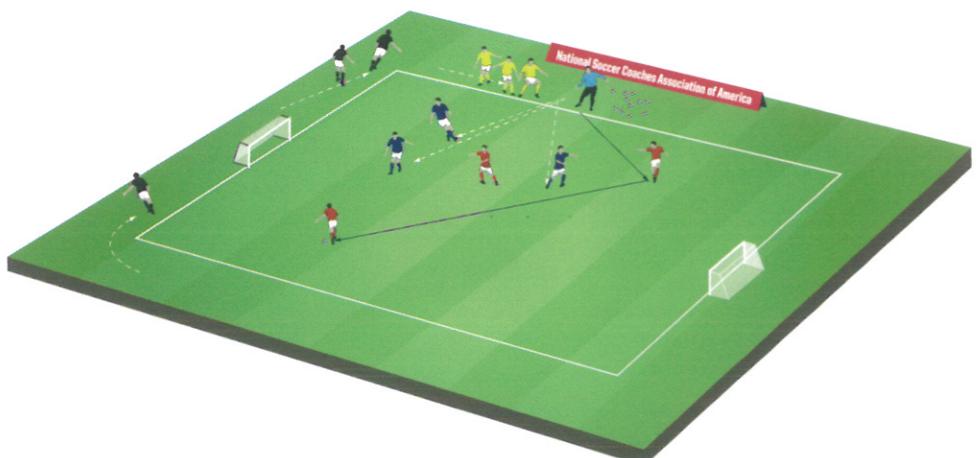
Top 3 themes: Combination play, attacking individually, in pairs and small groups, and defending.  
Top 3 competencies: Attacking 1v1, beating and escaping an opponent and support.



- + The black and yellow teams start the game on the field. Each team has a goalkeeper.
- + The black team is quick to see an attacking opportunity and a through pass is made to a deep teammate.
- + A goal is scored by blacks and the reds are ready to come onto the field.



- + The reds transition quicker than blacks and a red attack is rapid.
- + A 2v1 in favor of reds results and the 2 black forwards cannot recover in time.
- + To slow the attack down and allow the defense to organize, the coach can pass the ball behind the defense.



- + This time the coach plays backward and this allows the blues to stop the immediate penetration to goal.
- + The red defender drops deeper and another red player spreads wide and into space.
- + A firm cross field pass is made in front of the attacker who has an open goal.

# CREATING SPACE WITH SIMILAR AND OPPOSITE MOVEMENTS

## WHY USE IT

As players enter the 3rd stage of development, coaches will want to help players to understand how their movements on and off the ball can be complimentary and opposite. This is a simple set that will provide passing, movement and attacking opportunities.

## SET UP

10x20 yards area with cones placed in the 4 corners and halfway down both long sides. 1 player with a ball starts centrally at one end of the area, a player without a ball in the center of the area and a third player without a ball starts centrally at the other end line. The coach takes a position to see all the action.

## HOW TO PLAY

The movement patterns of players is triggered by the first touch of the passing player with the ball on line 1. The support player on the 2nd line moves in the opposite direction to the touch of the passing player. As the support player moves to the sideline, he/she should face the ball and open the body to be able to see the ball and the player on line 1. The player on line 3 moves complimentary to the player on line 1 and opposite to the support player on line 3. These are important considerations, as these movement patterns create the maximum amount of attacking space for the 3 players to operate. On receipt of the pass, the support player opens his/her body and passes with 2 touch to the third player. To create a transitional moment, the sequence changes to an attacking and defending activity as the final pass is made. On receipt of the ball, the player on line 3 becomes an attacker and drives forward into space on the dribble. The player on line 2 transitions into a defender and moves to confront the attacker. The attacker can perform a take on move to beat the defender. The players rotate with the player on the 1st line moving to line 2, player 2 to line 3 and player 3 to line 1.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Players should adjust their positioning by recognizing visual clues, such as the movement of the ball and players.
- + Coaching tips – Attention to detail is vital for activities requiring technical precision. Insist on a firm pass to space, a solid first touch out of the feet and sharp purposeful movements off the ball.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

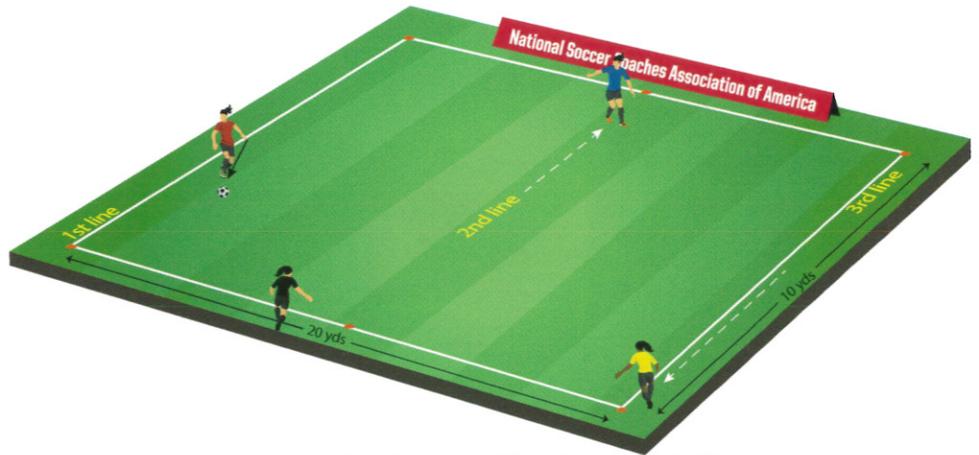
- + Less challenging - Start the support players in their final positions.
- + More challenging: Increase the distances to play longer passing.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

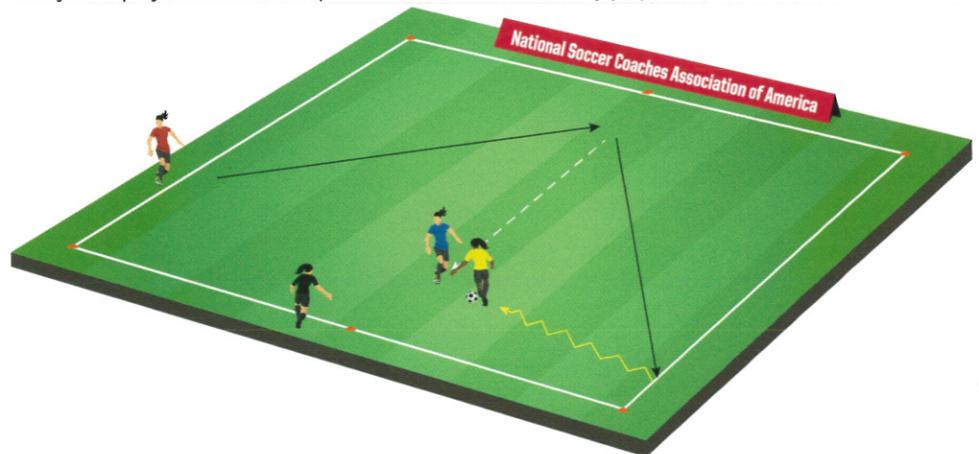
Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

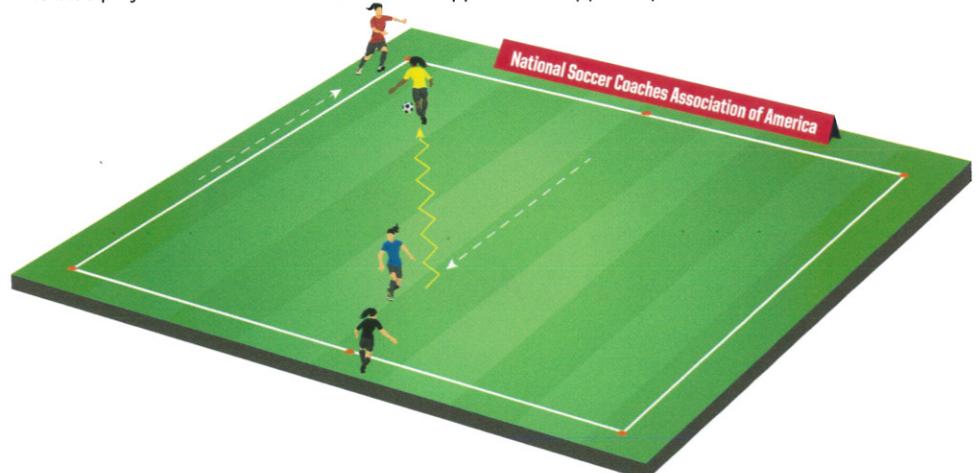
Top 3 themes: Combination play, creating space as an individual/small group and passing.  
Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, movement off the ball and defending pressure.



- + The 3 attackers move to create angles of support wide and attacking depth.
- + The red player takes a touch to the right.
- + The movement of the ball initiates opposite movement by the blue player back peddling to the sideline.
- + The yellow player moves to complement the ball movement by player 1.



- + The red player looks up and plays a firm pass along the ground to the 'back foot' of blue for a quick turn.
- + Blue plays in 2 touches to yellow who transitions to an attacker and penetrates into space.
- + The blue player transitions to a defender and applies semi-opposed pressure.



- + The yellow player performs a take on move to beat the blue defender.
- + If the blue defender wins the ball, he/she can dribble over line 3 for a point.
- + To add an additional challenge, the red player can also transition to defend the yellow attacker.

# PASSING PATTERNS 5V0 TO 6V1

## WHY USE IT

This is an exceptional activity to teach players how to create space in and out of ball possession. Players will learn to move in the opposite direction of their pass and to create confusion for defenders.

## SET UP

25x15 yards area with a cone placed in each corner and one cone in the center of the rectangle. A player stands 1 yard outside the area in each corner and one player starts in the center.

## HOW TO PLAY

The ball starts with a player in one of the corners who makes a pass along the short side to a player who checks away from the cone to provide some separation from an imaginary defender. It is important that all passes around the outside do not cross into the area and close down the available space for the central player. The receiving player then looks to make a pass to the central attacker who makes movement away from the ball initially and checks back at an angle. As the ball is played into the attacker, it is important for he/she to open the body to see the ball and the players at the other end. With two touches the central player makes a pass to either player at the other end of the area. As soon as the pass is made the central player runs in an opposite direction towards one of the corner players. As the ball is being transferred along the short side by the players at the opposite end, the corner player must react to the central player's runs and switch positions quickly. The pass and movement sequence continues.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Focus on making a properly weighted pass, movement away from the ball to create space, receive the ball with a solid first touch and movement away from the ball following a pass.
- + Coaching tips – It is commonplace for young players to close down space following a pass. A pattern play activity can help players to appreciate movement away from the ball and this time and space can be beneficial for a teammate receiving the pass.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Use pattern play to break down the movement patterns and passing sequences into small manageable chunks. The coach can also reduce the size of the area to make passing distance shorter.
- + More challenging: Add a passing combination between 2 central players and add a defender.

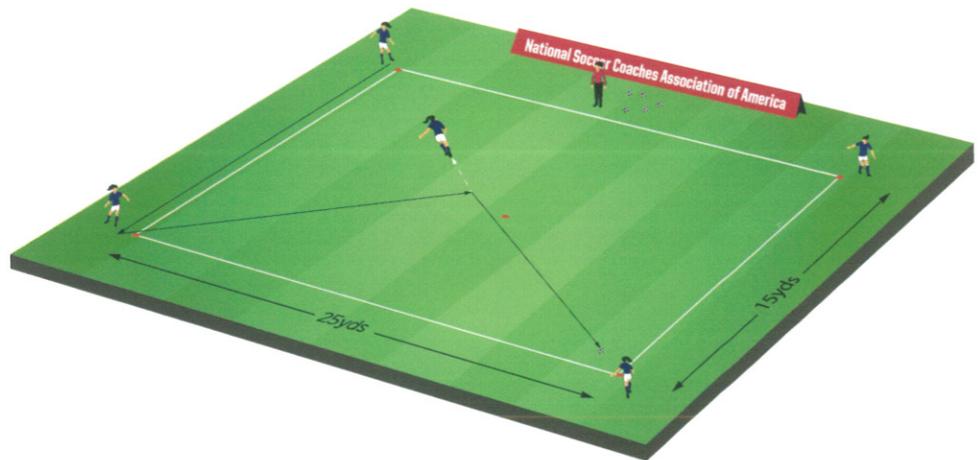
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Stages 3, 4 & 5 – 9-18 year old players

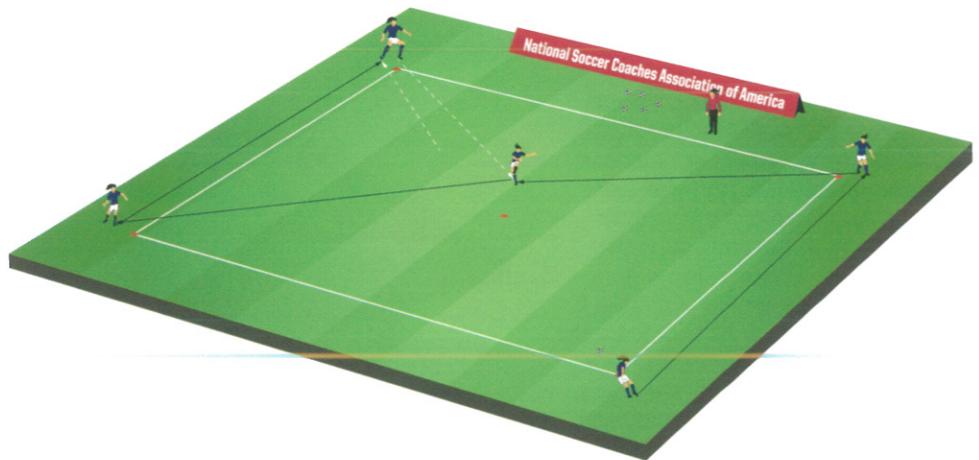
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

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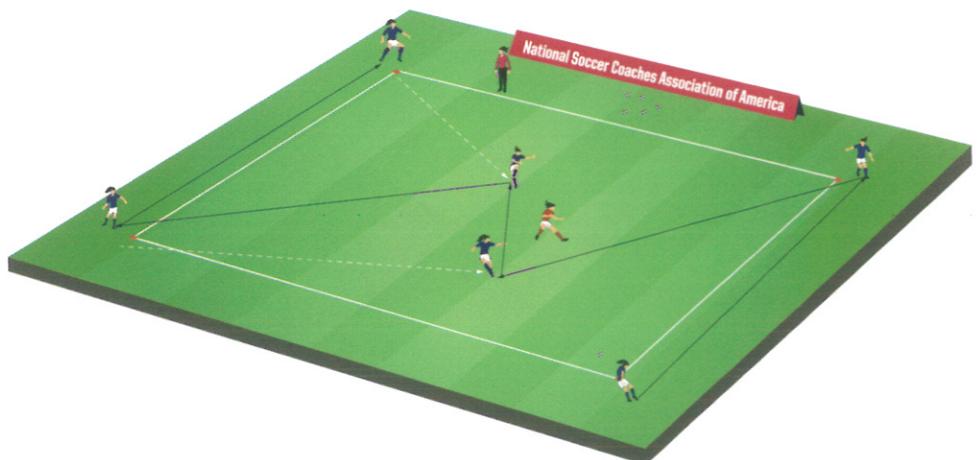
Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, movement off the ball and defending pressure.



- + 4 attacking players are positioned in each corner of the area at least one yard from the edge.
- + Another attacking player starts in the area near a central cone.
- + A passing combination along the short side, to the central attacker and to either corner player develops.



- + As soon as a pass is made to the corner player, the central player runs in the opposite direction.
- + The corner player exchanges positions with the central player as the ball transfers between corner players.
- + The passing combinations continue from one end to the other with corresponding movements off the ball.



- + To progress the activity the coach can firstly add an extra player to the center to encourage a wall pass.
- + The next step is to add a defender so the corner player must make a decision which central player to pass to.
- + Both central players exchange with the corner players as soon as the pass is made.

# PASSING AND CREATING SPACE WARM-UP

## WHY USE IT

An extremely versatile activity for introducing technical concepts with your players. The coach can manipulate numerous variables to change the focus and the intensity.

## SET UP

35x20 yards. '3 or 4 even numbered 'teams' are in the area. One ball per player and 3-4 colored training vests. Lines and/or cones are needed to establish the playing area.

## HOW TO PLAY

As players arrive at the training session, give them a vest and a ball so they can commence dribbling in the area. Allocate a take-on or escape move to practice. Transition to passing combinations between pairs. Players dribble and pass one ball, moving around the area attempting to cover as much of the space as possible. Passing exchanges must be quick and at least 8 yards apart. Introduce the wall pass, overlap, double pass and takeover - whatever you decide is the main theme of the session. Work with the passer to create time and space by looking over the shoulder and playing the ball into space or the feet of the partner. Think of the other players as defenders, and make passes away from pressure. Work with the receiver on first touch into space and verbal and non-verbal communication. Progress to working as a team of 4 - players cannot make 2 consecutive combinations with the same partner. Then position 2 players from each team on the outside of the area - players on the inside should combine with the outside teammates. Finally, each team has 1 ball and must move from one side to the other combining passes with all 4 players - wall pass, overlap, takeover etc.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with individual players on body shape, first touch and movement off the ball.
- + Coaching tips - Use this activity multiple sessions, focussing on 1-2 coaching points each time. Repeat and reinforce.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Unlimited touches, reduce the number of players, increase the space.
- + More challenging: Limit touches to 2 or 1 touch, add a double pass combination, change the type of combination - wall pass, overlap and add a movement sequence.

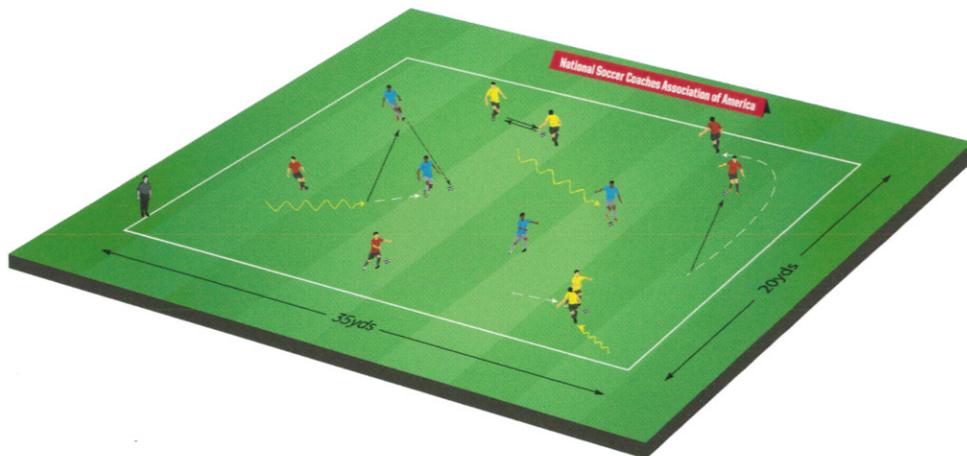
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Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

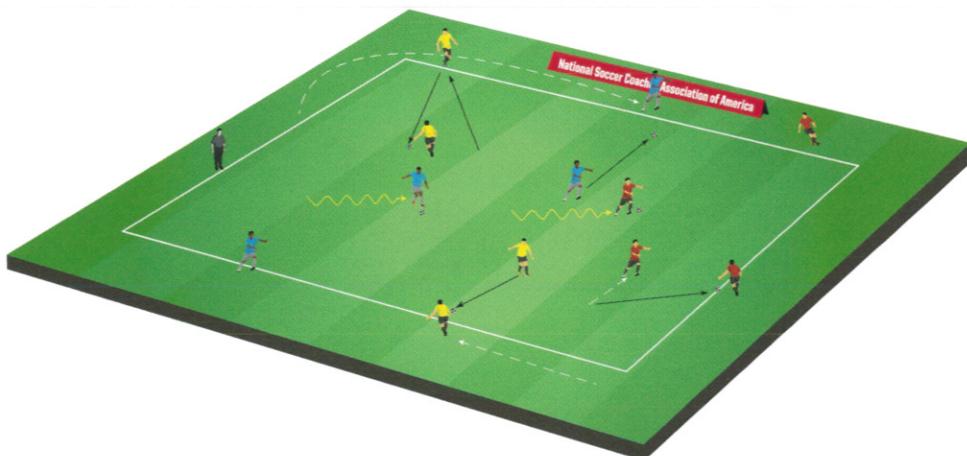
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

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 work in pairs with 1 ball, dribbling, passing and moving.
- + Each team color has 2 pairs.
- + Introduce moves such as, a wall pass, overlap, double pass and takeover.



- + 2 players from each team work around the perimeter - moving freely to support the inside players.
- + Inside players must combine with outside players with a wall pass.
- + The coach can work with inside players on different ways to create space - open body, let the ball run etc.



- + 1 ball per team.
- + Inside players must combine with the 2 outside players in a fluent and rhythmic sequence.
- + Add different conditions - 1 or 2 touch, outside players must move to a different side, etc.

# CENTER MIDFIELD LINK-UP AND FINISHING 3V2

## WHY USE IT

As young players start to develop a proficiency in the basic techniques, coaches can start to work with players on positional roles and principles of play. In this activity our focus is on the link play between central midfield players and strikers and creating depth in attack.

## SET UP

A 40x20 yards area with 2 small goals at both ends of the field approximately 8 yards apart. Play 2v2 inside the area and each team has a striker positioned off the end line and between the goals at the attacking end of the field. The coach starts with the balls on the sideline.

## HOW TO PLAY

In a 6v6 to 11v11 game, coaches will often play with 1 or more central midfield players and strikers. Time is well spent on the training ground working on link play and emphasizing different types of passing combinations and movements of the ball. The coach starts the activity by playing a pass to either team in their defensive half of the field. The objective is for the attacking team to score in either of the 2 small goals. The attacking team has a striker positioned between the goals that should be used to maintain possession and establish triangle combinations between the 3 attackers. The defenders must attempt to win possession and counter attack using the numerical advantage - 3v2.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the attacking team to use their numerical advantage and deep lying striker. Challenge the attacking team to play quickly to the unmarked striker and make runs off the ball to confuse the defense.
- + Coaching tips – Playing with 4 lines - goalkeeper, defense, midfield and strikers - requires the team to develop depth (spreading the play vertically). With players in stage 3, in particular, the concept of depth is often hard to grasp, so the coach can impose conditions such as playing with a striker 'fixed' to the end line to establish depth.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Remove 1 of the defenders if the attackers are struggling to combine and score. Move the goals further apart to spread the defenders and give the striker more room to operate. Start the defenders in the defensive end.
- + More challenging: Limit finishing touches to 1 touch, insist that before every goal the striker must touch the ball and add a condition that all 3 attackers must touch the ball before a goal is scored.

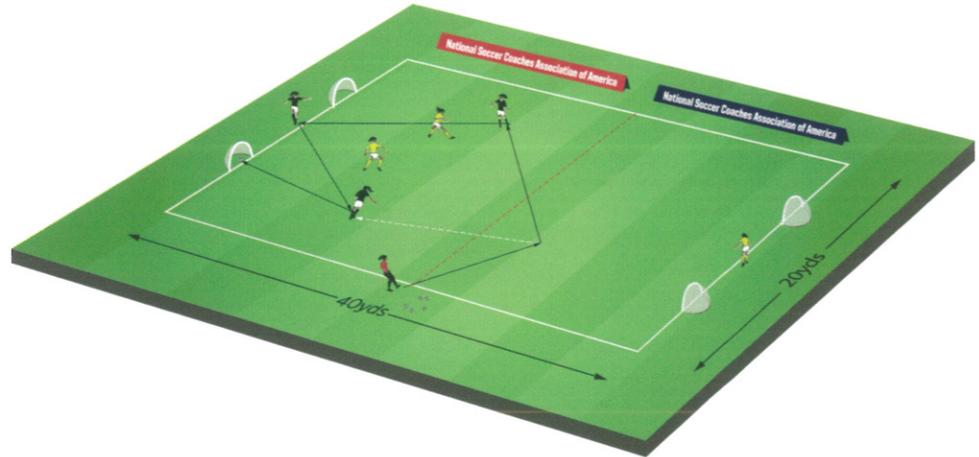
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

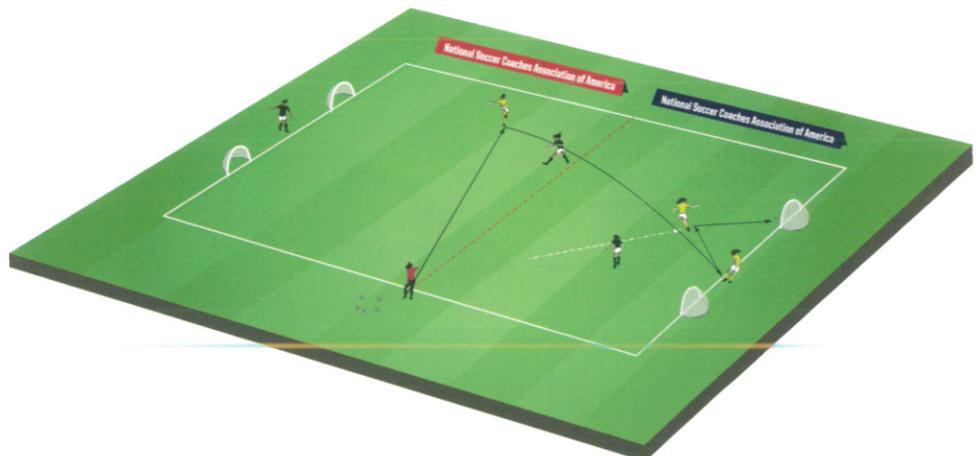
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

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

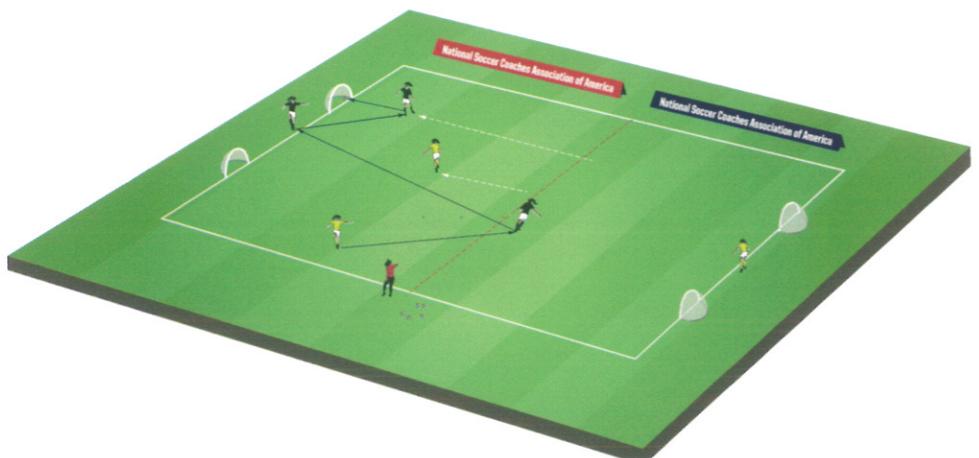
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, making support runs and defending pressure/cover.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to a black player in the defense half of the field.
- + The black attackers attempt to create width inside the field and the striker between the goals provides depth.
- + An effective passing combination with the striker and intelligent movement off the ball leads to a goal.



- + The coach again restarts the game with a pass to the yellow team.
- + The yellow attacker has good vision and decides to play direct to the unmarked yellow striker.
- + As the ball is travelling the yellow midfielder makes a run under the path of the ball and has a tap in.



- + In the final sequence the black team intercepts the ball and catches the yellow team in transition.
- + The black player intercepting the ball makes a firm penetrating pass to the striker.
- + The striker is supported quickly in transition by the other black player who is left unmarked and scores.

# CREATING SPACE WITH MOVEMENT AND COMBINATIONS 6V3

## WHY USE IT

Developing the correct 'spacing' between players and movement off the ball to create space are hot topics for coaches working with players in Stages 3 and 4. Young players have a tendency to reduce space for themselves and others as they edge closer and closer to the ball.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 40x20 yards area with 2 goals at one end of the field approximately 8 yards apart. 2 attackers play against 1 defender in a 10 yard end zone stretched across the width of the field. Play 3 attackers v 2 defenders in the larger area segmented into 4 triangular shaped zones with cones. Opposite the goals at the other end of the field is an attacker in a 10 yards end zone stretching the width of the area. The balls are placed in the goals to start.

## HOW TO PLAY

The attacking team must attempt to pass the ball from the back field, through midfield and reach the target player at the other end of the field. The attacking players in the zone near the goals start with the ball and must try to pass to one of the attacking midfield players. To help the attackers appreciate the need to maintain distance between them, no more than 1 attacker can occupy the triangular spaces in the center of the area. Once a midfield player has touched the ball a pass can be made to the attacking target player for a point, or the attacking players can possess the ball to create an opening. The defenders can move anywhere and if they win possession they attempt to score in either of the 2 goals for a point. First team to 5 points wins.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – The attackers must attempt to make the field 'big' making maximum use of the available space. Midfield players should move the extreme edges of their area to create width and depth.
- + Coaching tips – Restricting the number of players allowed in a particular area provides some control over the space between players. The coach will need to reinforce 'stretching' the field wide because the natural tendency for young players is to creep into the center and follow the ball.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Commence pattern play with a passive defense.
- + More challenging: Impose a touch restriction for attackers. Require players to play in a particular pattern and add an extra defender.

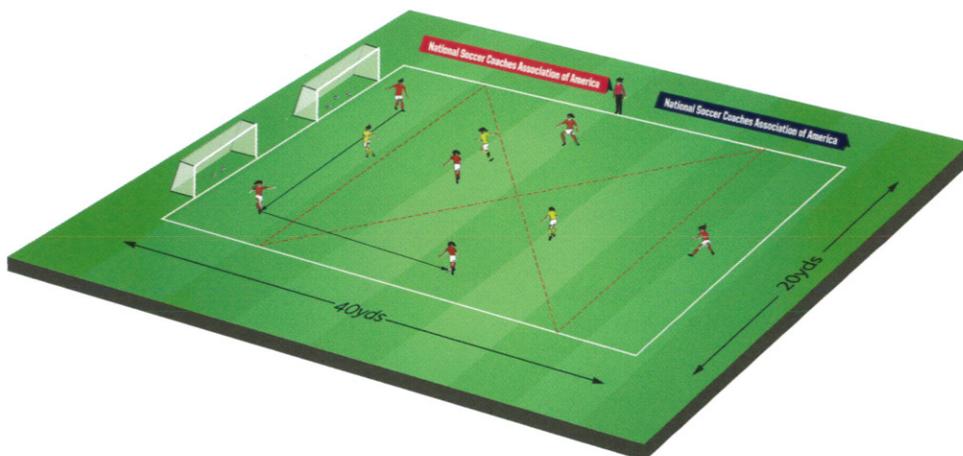
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

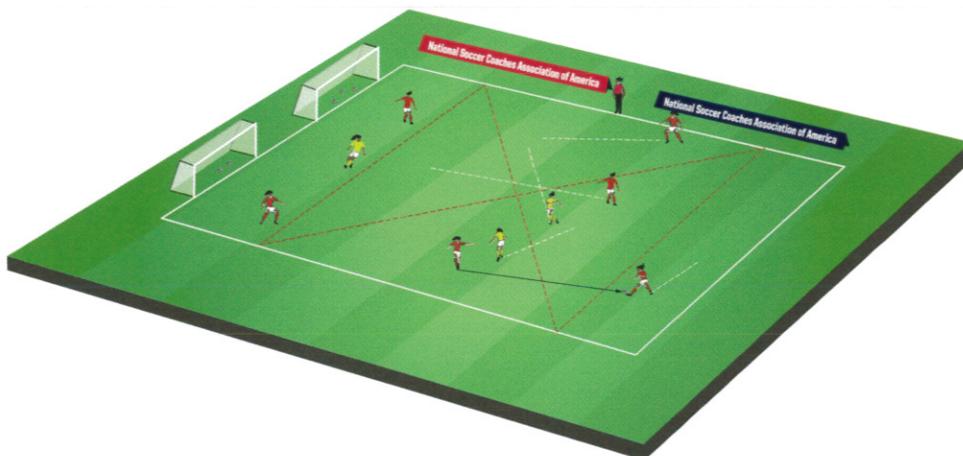
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

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

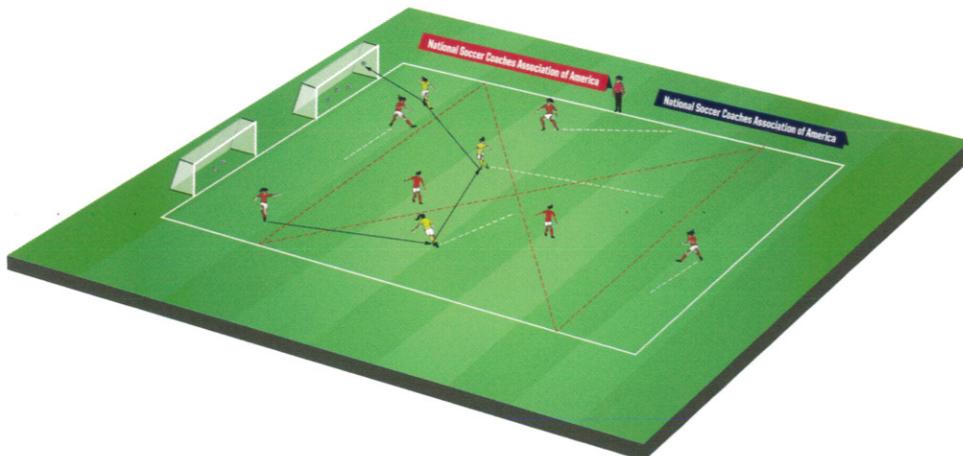
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, making support runs and defending pressure/cover.



- + One of the 2 attacking players close to goal start the activity by collecting a ball from inside one of the goals.
- + A pass is made by the red attacker to switch the field from left to right. The defenders are slow to react.
- + The red midfielder moves wide and receives a pass in 'acres' of space.



- + With time to turn the red midfielder makes a pass to the red target player moving along the end zone.
- + The red team are restricted to only one player in each triangular zone and they do well to maintain space.
- + 'Spreading the field', the red team makes defending challenging and yellows cannot prevent reds scoring 1pt.



- + In the final sequence the yellow team have intercepted an errant pass out of the backfield by reds.
- + The counter attack is swift and the yellow attacker is able to find sufficient space to score.
- + The yellow players can move freely in the area, but the reds are restricted to their zones.

# DEFENDING IN PAIRS AND 3'S - 2V5 TO 3V5

## WHY USE IT

This activity is versatile and can focus on attacking and defending concepts. In this variation the emphasis is on the defensive responsibilities and techniques of the pressure and cover defenders.

## SET UP

15x15 yards square with a small 2x2 yards square in the center. Approximately 2 yards off the edge of the large square and located adjacent to each corner are 4 small sided goals. 4 attacking players start centrally along each side of the large square and 1 attacker stands inside the smaller square. 2 defenders can move freely inside the larger square. The coach stands with all the balls and is responsible for starting the play.

## HOW TO PLAY

The action starts with a pass from the coach to any of the 4 peripheral attacking players who can move along the outside of the square, but must stay on their side of the area. The objective of the game is for the attacking players to combine passes and seek an opportunity to make a penetrating pass to the attacking player in the center. Each successful pass earns a point for the attackers. Conversely, the defenders must prevent the pass to the attacking player and they attempt to intercept a pass. The defenders can play up to the edge of the area, but must not step outside the square. If the defenders intercept the pass, they must attempt to score in any of the corner goals for 2 points. First team to score 6 points wins. If the defenders win possession, the outside attacking players must sprint to protect the goals.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - The coach has an ideal opportunity to work with the pressure defender on body positioning, being patient and waiting for a bad first touch by an attacker, closing down space and time and working in unison with the cover defender. The cover defender must protect against the penetrating pass and communicate effectively.
- + Coaching tips - Coaches must know the 5 principles of defending, namely pressure, cover, balance, compactness and restraint. This activity requires excellent appreciation of the principles by the players.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

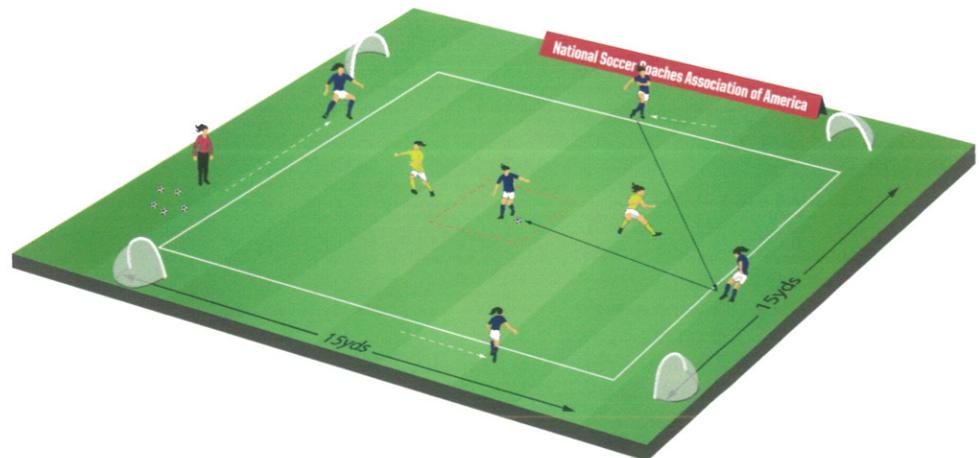
- + Less challenging: Start with 3 peripheral attackers so play becomes slower and predictable.
- + More challenging: Limit the attackers to 1 or 2 touches to increase the speed of play.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

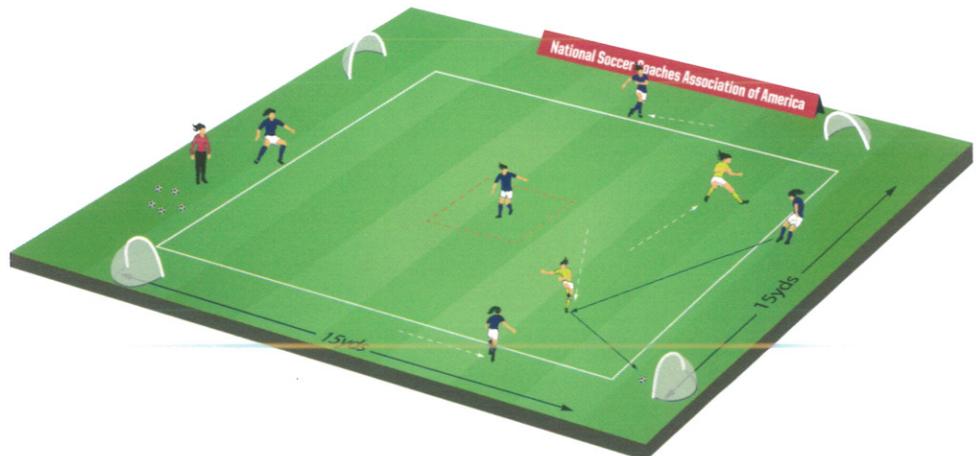
Stages 3, 4 - 9-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

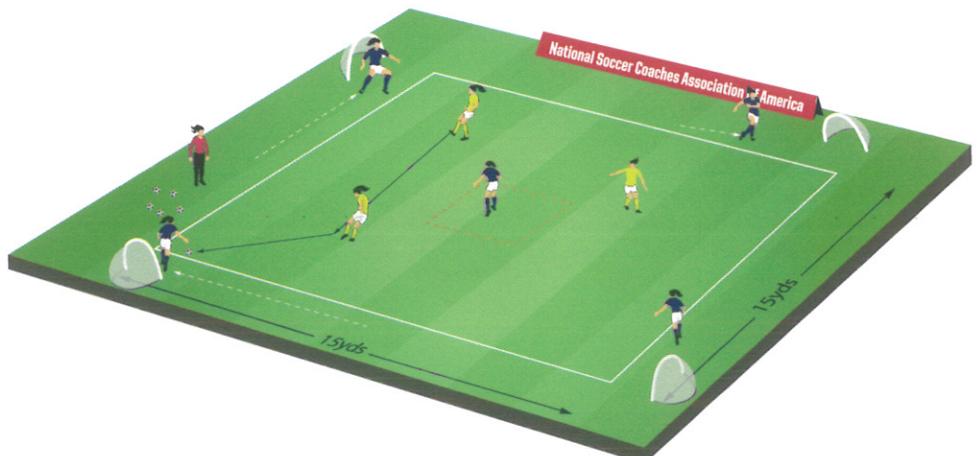
Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.  
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, cover defending and transition to attack.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to 1 of 4 peripheral attackers.
- + 2 attackers combine and pass to the central attacker for 1 point.
- + The yellow defenders do not coordinate their efforts and allow big spaces for the attackers to exploit.



- + In this sequence the yellow defenders work well together, with the first defender making an angled approach.
- + The second defender takes an excellent cover position to prevent a penetrating pass centrally.
- + The outside attacker is under pressure and attempts a pass across that is intercepted by the cover defender.



- + In the final sequence the yellows intercept the pass and decide to combine passes inside the square.
- + The blue attackers transition to defence and move quickly to protect the 4 goals.
- + The yellows are too slow and find all 4 goals are blocked.

# DEFENDING IN PAIRS AND 3'S OVERLOAD

## WHY USE IT

In this fast paced activity the objective is to delay the attack as long as possible to allow help to arrive.

## SET UP

2 adjacent 30x15 yards areas with a small sided goal placed at one end. Cones or a line divide each area into two. 2 games are played concurrently, with 1v1 in each quadrant. The coach stands at the end opposite the goals with a large supply of balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts the activity with a pass to the attacking player in each of the adjacent areas. The objective for the attacking team is to advance the ball into the attacking zone and score a goal worth 5 points. If the defenders win possession and make a pass to the coach they are awarded 1 point. The attacker with the ball must attempt to pass to the attacker in the attacking zone. Once a pass is made, the players can move into the attacking zone and play 2v2. If a goal is scored, a pass is made to the coach or the ball goes out of play, the defenders from one game can now support the 2 defenders from the other game to create a defensive overload. The attackers cannot transfer over to the other game.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Teaching young players patience in defense is not an easy task. This game rewards the patient defenders by allowing reinforcements to arrive and create an overload. Applying tight pressure and force play away from goal is needed, as is immediate chase if a defender is beaten by an attacker.
- + Coaching tips – The coach can communicate a clear message to the players by adding conditions, rules and objectives. In this example the coach has created a very lopsided scoring system to favor the attackers. With a goal worth 5 points the defenders will hopefully value preventing the attackers from scoring and wait for support over winning possession.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Remove the line splitting the zones and play 1v1. Prevent players leaving their zone and narrow the area to reduce the space for the defender to cover.
- + More challenging: Make the activity continuous by restarting each game once a ball is out of play. In so doing, the defenders must decide which attack to prevent.

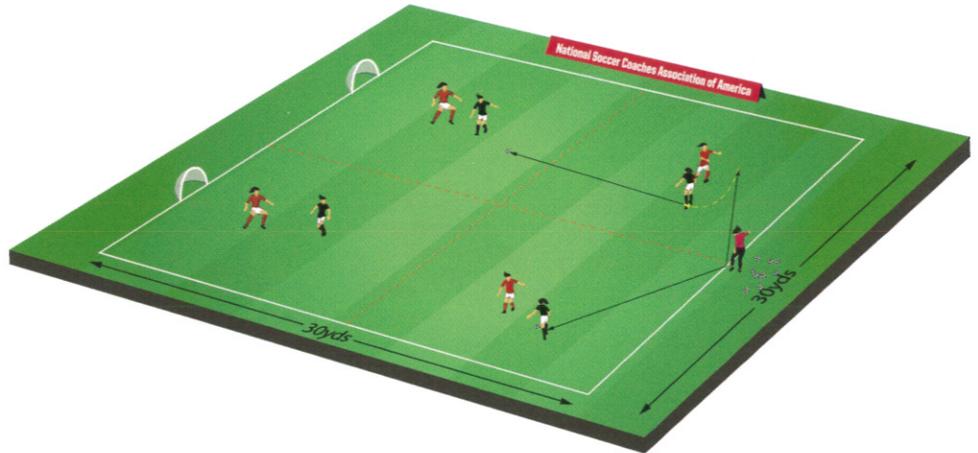
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

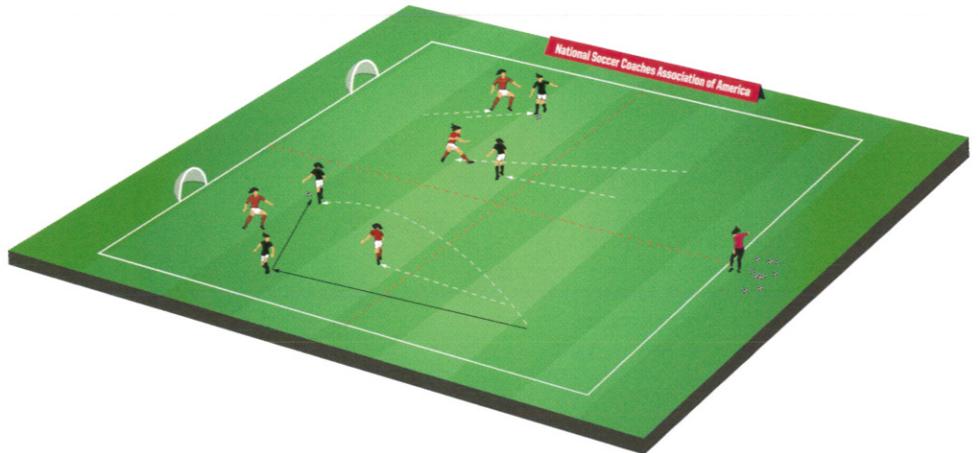
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

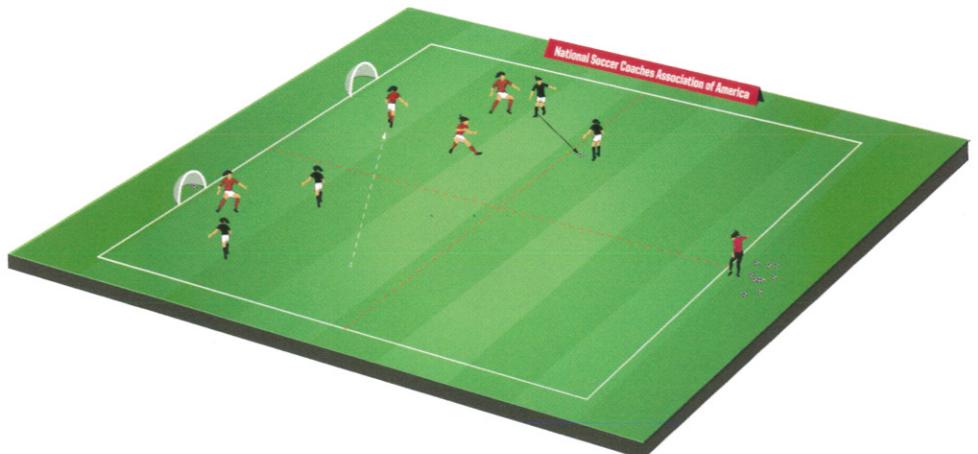
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, cover defending and transition to attack.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to the black attacking players.
- + There are 2 games occurring simultaneously.
- + The attackers must try to combine and score, and the defenders try to force the attack away from the goal.



- + In game 1 to the coach's left, the reds have allowed the blacks too much time and space and the attacking player has an open goal to shoot at.
- + In game 2, the red defenders have established good defensive positioning and have delayed the attack.



- + As a result of the defenders' success in game 2, a defender from game 1 is able to join the red team.
- + A 3v2 defensive overload is established and so the red team can start to become more aggressive.
- + The coach could immediately restart game 1 leaving the defenders to decide which game to support.

# DELAYING THE ATTACK 1V1 TO 2V2

## WHY USE IT

A frequent occurrence in games involving players in Stages 3 and 4 is a 1v1 breakaway. Training young defenders to manage these situations will be time well spent and the result will likely be more defensive success and fewer goals conceded.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 40x30 yards area with an appropriate size goal at each end. 3 zones are created - 2 end zones 15 yards wide and a middle zone 10 yards wide. In each end zone start with a goalkeeper plus 1v1 and in the center zone play 2v2. The coach stands at the halfway point with a large supply of balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach starts each sequence with a pass into the defensive zone. On receipt of the ball the defender has 2 uncontested touches before the striker can attempt to win the ball. This extra time should permit the defender to make a pass into one of the 2 midfield players. Following a successful pass the defender can join to create a 3v2. The attacking objective is to work the ball through the zones and serve the attacker. As the ball approaches or when the striker moves the defender must prepare and adjust his/her position and body shape. Play first to 5 goals wins.

## COACHING NOTES

+ Coaching objectives - As the ball enters into the attacking zone the defender must apply pressure and force play away from goal. Delaying the attack is critical and defenders must not be overly eager to win the ball. Although somewhat counter intuitive if a defender gives a young attacker in possession time, he/she will invariably turnover the ball to the defensive team.

+ Coaching tips - The prevailing attitude of most coaches playing 5v5 or 6v6 is to commit all but 1 or 2 players to attack and this often leaves a solitary defender anchoring the team. As turnovers happen frequently at these age groups, defensive players are often caught in transition. This results in a good number of 1v1 breakaways. Consequently, coaches must take time to teach defenders to be patient and delay.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

+ Less challenging: Keep the number of players equal and restrict the attackers to their zone.

+ More challenging: Permit 1 attacker and 1 defender to support the attack and create 2v2.

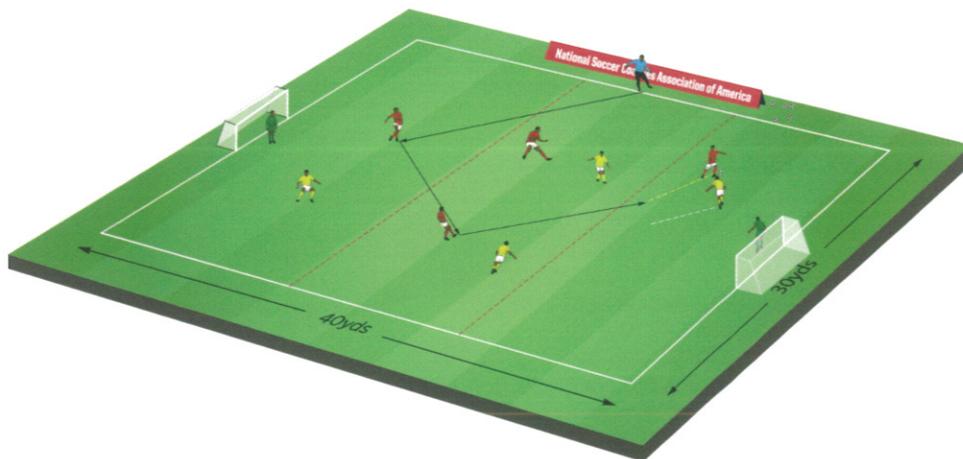
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

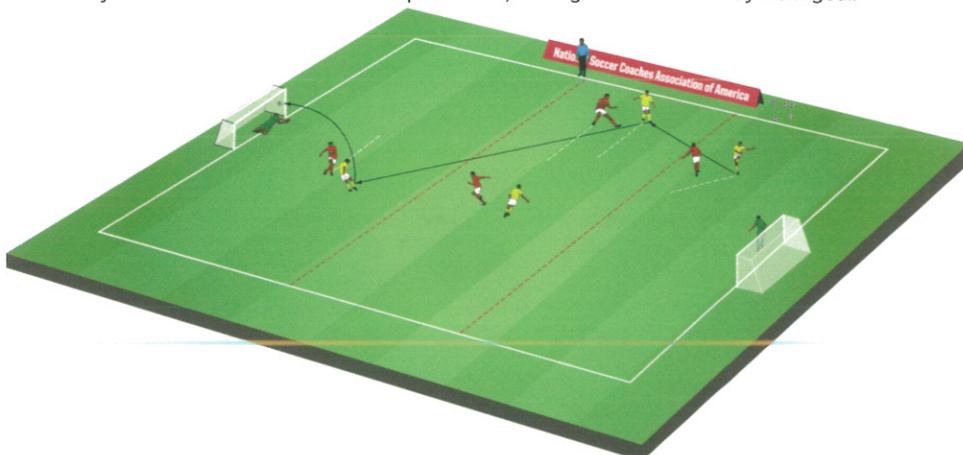
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

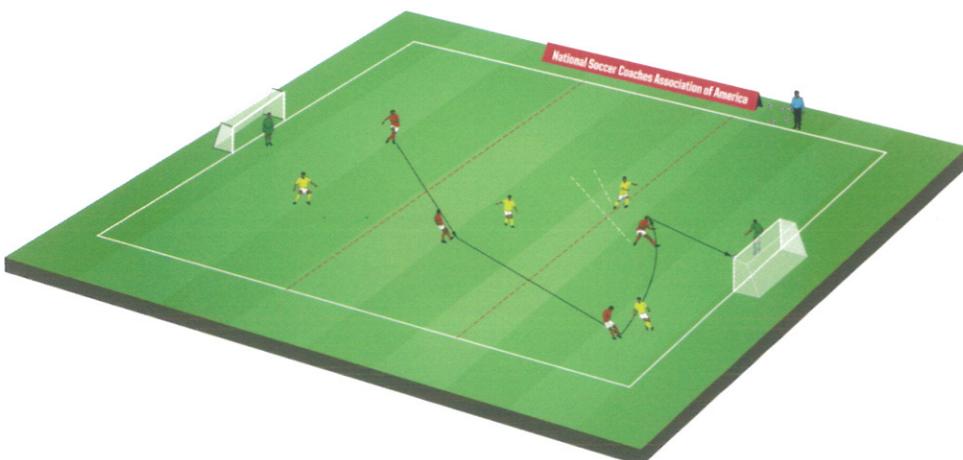
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, defending to delay and transition to attack.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to the red defender in the defensive end of the field.
- + The defender has 2 uncontested touches before the striker can attempt to win the ball.
- + The red team are successful in building up play to the red striker. As a pass is made into the attacking zone the yellow defender is alert and well positioned, forcing the attacker away from goal.



- + As play progresses the yellow defender is patient and the red attacker loses possession.
- + The yellow defender quickly transitions the ball to the midfielder who turns and passes forward.
- + Unlike the yellow defender, the red defender is not ready and the yellow striker turns and shoots at goal.



- + In the final sequence the red team builds up play through the zones and releases the red striker slightly wide.
- + The yellow defender does well again to prevent a shot and hold the attacker wide.
- + However, a red midfielder player supports centrally and a yellow midfielder player fails to work back goal side.

# RUSH GOALIES 2V2 TO 3V3

## WHY USE IT

This activity is extremely versatile and can be used to teach attacking and defending concepts. In this example we are focusing on defending and specifically recovery runs. 'Rush Goalie' is a term we used as kids to describe an outfield player allowed to use their hands.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 30x20 yards area with a medium size goal at each end. Use cones or lines to split the field in two. Start with 2v2 and progress to 3v3 if appropriate. Balls should be placed next to each goal.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prior to commencing the game ask each team to nominate a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper is the 'Rush Goalie' who can support attacks. This player is the only one allowed to handle the ball within 3 yards of goal. Play starts with a keeper distributing the ball to his/her partner. To begin only 1 opponent is able to contest for the ball and the Rush Goalie must sprint back to within 3 yards of the goal. The objective for the attacking team is to score in the opponent's goal but both teammates must be across the half when the ball enters the net. This condition forces the Rush Goalie forward and consequently when the ball is turned over the rush goalie must make a recovery run to get into a position to save a shot. As the keeper is recovering the teammate must defend with patience and delay the attack.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with the defenders to make good recovery decisions. The Rush Goalie must sprint back to protect the goal and the teammate must delay as long as possible so the defenders can regain an organized shape.
- + Coaching tips – The inclusion of a Rush Goalie introduces an interesting dynamic and teaching moment. From an attacking perspective the keeper must support to provide even numbers, but cannot over commit or the opponents will be able to score easily in transition. The pair working effortlessly when they turn over the ball will be most successful.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

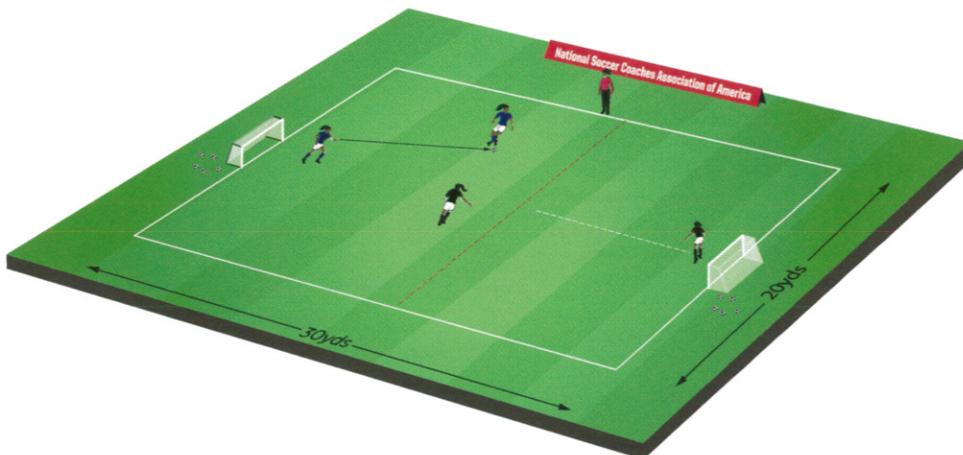
- + Less challenging: Start with 2v2 and insist on the Rush Goalie retreating to the goal following a turnover.
- + More challenging: Add an additional player to each team and reduce or eliminate restrictions.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

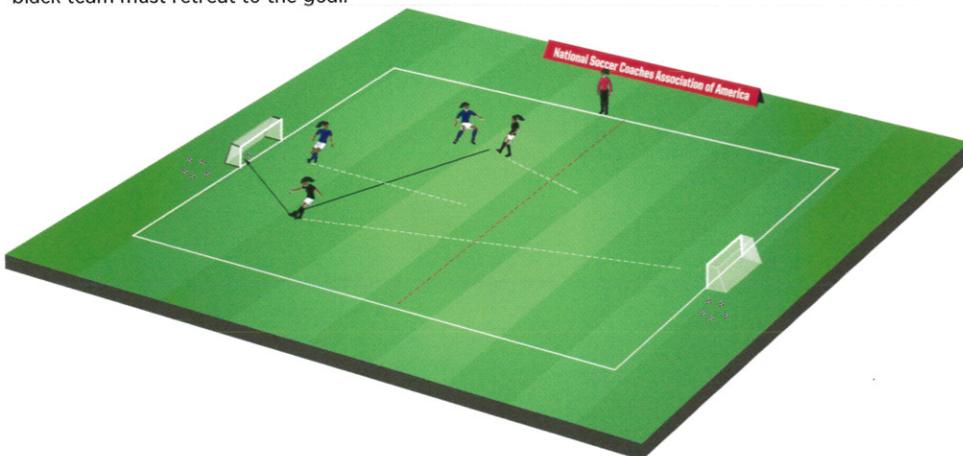
Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

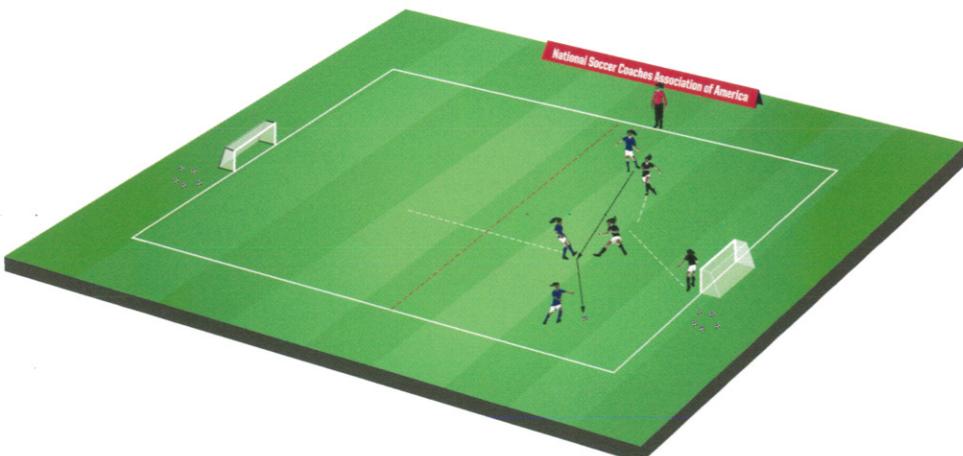
Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.  
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, defensive recovery runs and transition to attack.



- + The blue goalkeeper starts with the ball in the defensive end and passes to a teammate.
- + Each team has 1 person that is allowed to handle the ball - the 'Rush Goalie'.
- + Only 1 player from the black defending team is allowed to enter the blue half and the Rush Goalie for the black team must retreat to the goal.



- + The black defender forces a turnover and keeps possession until the Rush Goalie can sprint to support.
- + The blue players are slow to recover and the blue's Rush Goalie is caught too high up field.
- + The blacks combine well and score into an open net.



- + In the final sequence the coach has added a player to each team to create 3v3.
- + The tactics change and both teams can be more defensive minded as they attack.
- + The black team is able to drop into a compact shape around their goal, making attacking difficult for blues.

# ROCK SOLID DEFENDING 3V5

## WHY USE IT

This activity provides defenders plenty of opportunities to perfect pressure, cover and balance defending in and around the penalty box. Margins for error are small when the attacking team are so close to goal. Consequently, defensive movement to close down a shooting opportunity or to provide support to a player out of position is important to rehearse.

## SET UP

The activity occurs in and around the penalty area with a goalkeeper protecting an appropriate size goal. Inside the penalty area are 3 defenders playing against 2 strikers and on the periphery of the penalty box are 2 wide attackers and a central attacking midfielder player. The coach stands 10 yards outside the box with a large supply of balls and initiates all restarts.

## HOW TO PLAY

The coach has 4 options to start the game. The first is to pass to the central attacking midfielder player who can dribble, pass or shoot and the second is to pass wide to either winger who can dribble, pass or shoot. The third option is to play into the feet of the strikers who must try to combine with the other striker and the fourth option is to keep the defense on their toes and shoot. Whichever option the coach selects the 3 defenders must be alert and ready to work individually and collectively to prevent a shot. Play for 5 minutes and then change the teams.

## COACHING NOTES

+ Coaching objectives - There are several opportunities to coach the defenders. Priority one is to close down the space and pressure the ball to prevent a shot or cross.

As one player moves towards the opponent with the ball, the other 2 defenders must adjust their positions and body shape to provide cover and balance.

+ Coaching tips - Coaches working with players in the 3rd stage of development will find this activity particularly useful in developing player confidence and understanding. Often young players will be slow or reluctant to shut down a shot and give attackers far too much time and space within shooting range.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

+ Less challenging: Start with 1 attacking option and work with the defenders on positioning and decision making before adding.

+ More challenging: Serve a ball quickly to catch the defenders in a disorganized shape.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3 & 4 - 6-14 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Individual and small group defending, short passing and movement off the ball.

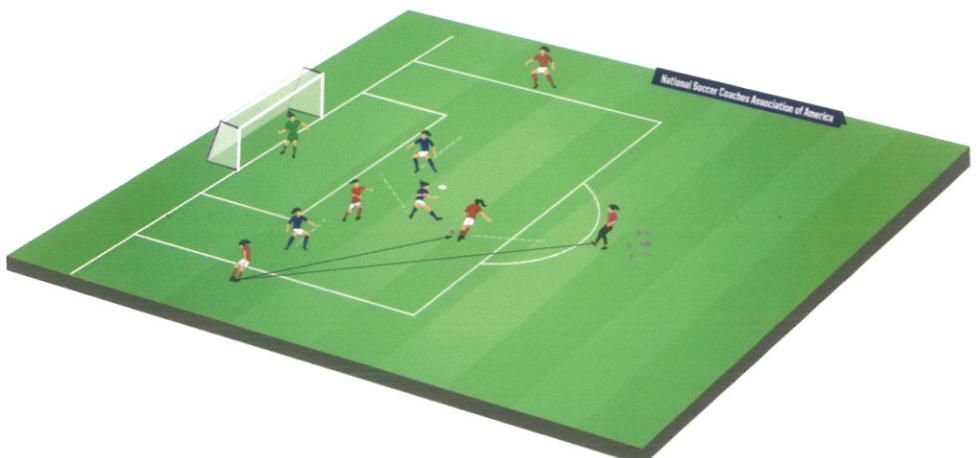
Top 3 competencies: Pressure defending, marking in the penalty box and communication.



- + The 3 blue defenders must be alert to prevent the 5 red attacking players shooting at goal.
- + The coach can play a pass to either red winger, the strikers or the attacking midfielder player.
- + As the ball is moving the blue defenders must start to adjust their positions and body shape. An attempt by the red striker to combine in the box is anticipated by the defender who intercepts the pass.



- + In the second diagram the coach spreads the ball wide to the winger on the right.
- + The defenders elect to stay compact in front of goal and not charge towards the winger to prevent the cross.
- + The decision to remain close to goal is a good one and the defender is able to head a near post cross clear.



- + The red team attempts to attack down the opposite side and the winger cuts the ball back into the path of the attacking midfielder moving into the penalty area.
- + The defenders are once again alert and one defender applies pressure and the others recover to mark.

# 6 BALL PASSING

## WHY USE IT

This passing activity adds the pressure of defenders, time and the challenge of another team. Quick feet and creativity are needed in abundance in a tight space to transfer 6 balls from one end of the area to the other.

## SET UP

Two adjacent 10x6 yard areas separated by a 2 yards safety zone. In each area, play 4v1 with 2 target players and 2 attackers against 1 defender. Each group needs 6 balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the activity is for the attacking team to transfer 6 balls from one end of the area as quickly as possible to the other. Each ball successfully transferred wins a point. In the first sequence, if the defender wins the ball, the ball is 'dead' and a new ball is served. Rotate the players after each round. At least 1 attacking player must touch the ball before it is transferred. Players can pass and dribble. In the 2nd sequence, add a counter attack goal for the defender to score - if a goal is scored deduct a point from the attackers. In the final sequence, add a second defender creating a 4v2.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with the server to select the best pass - to the 'front foot' or 'back foot'. Attacking players need to move wide and deep, exchanging places to find space. Body position when receiving the ball is crucial and is based on the defensive pressure. The aim is to play quick and direct, show attackers must take the opportunity to pass. Encourage innovative play and tricks.
- + Coaching tips - Use player numbers to add more or less challenge at the appropriate time, alternating until achieving the right balance.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

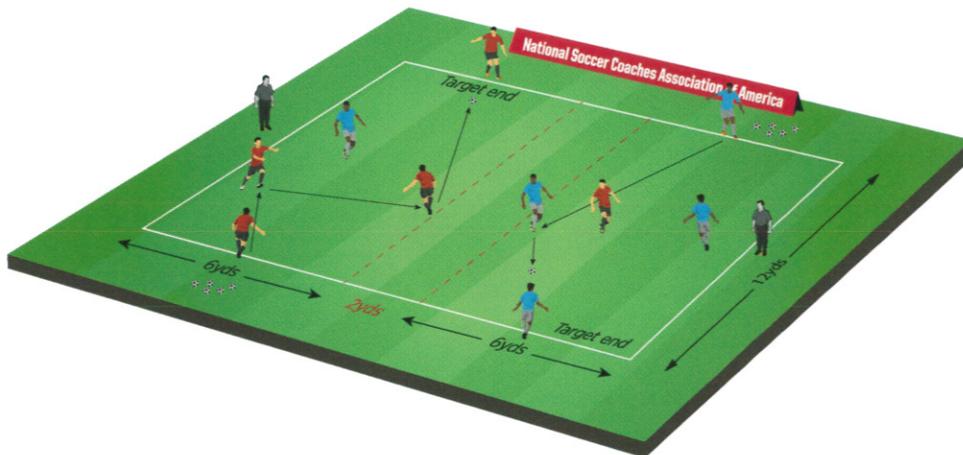
- + Less challenging: Increase the width of the area, start the defender in the back half of the area and allow the internal attackers to combine with the server to create 3v1.
- + More challenging: Introduce a 2nd defender. Once a pass is made to the target, the target and passers change positions in the flow. Defenders can play 2v2 on 3 occasions - stepping off on the other 3 (i.e ball 1, 3 and 5). Allow the server to enter the area to create 3v2.

## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

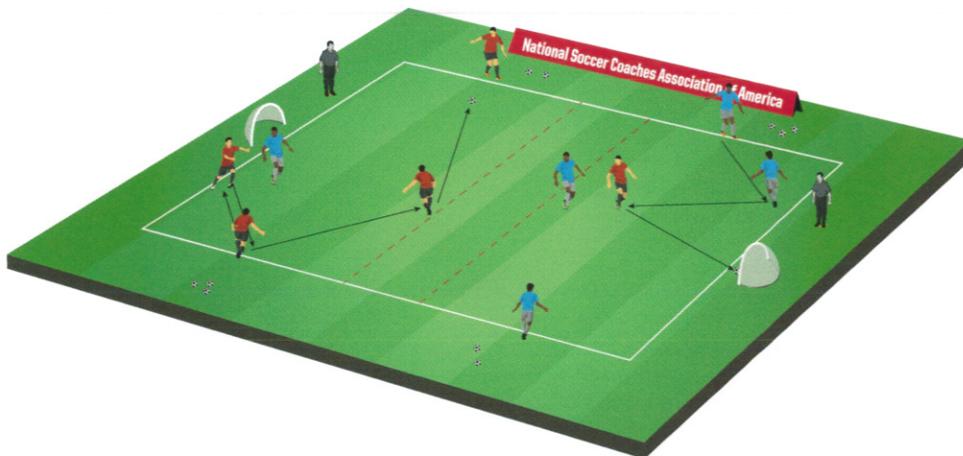
Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

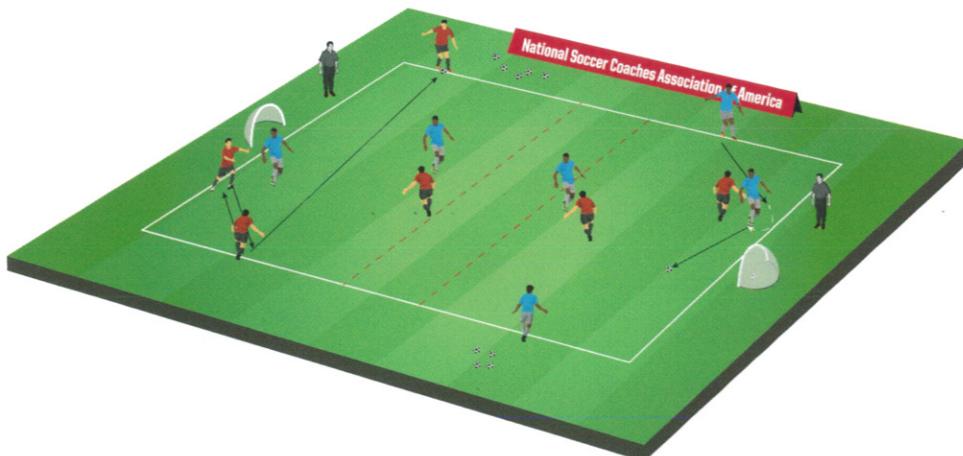
Top 3 themes: Passing over a short distances, combination play and creating space.  
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving and support with and without the ball.



- + A red server with 6 balls plays a pass to an attacker that finds space.
- + Red attackers play in front of the defender and pass to the target player.
- + The blue attackers play more direct, with a first time pass to the target.



- + The blue defender plays 'high and tight', so the server plays a double pass and releases the other red.
- + The blue attackers make a weak square pass that is cut out by the red defender.
- + The red defender scores in the counter attack goal and blues lose a point.



- + An additional defender is added. 4v2 in each area.
- + Both red attackers are tightly marked. The server combines and plays a direct pass to the target.
- + The red defender attempts to cut out the server's pass, but the blue attacker spins and passes to the target.

# ATTACKING COMBINATIONS CLOSE TO GOAL 1V1-2V1

## WHY USE IT

A dynamic attacking activity emphasizing accurate passing combinations, 1v1 and 2v1 attacking play, creating space and retaining possession. The activity can also focus on defending and goalkeeping.

## SET UP

20x10 yards area with 2 appropriately sized goals at both ends. A line/cones split the field in half. In one half, play 2 attackers v 1 defender and in the other half 1v1. A goalkeeper at each end. The coach has a supply of balls.

## HOW TO PLAY

The activity starts with one attacker in each half passing a ball to the attacker in the other half. The 2 attackers attempt to combine and score as quickly as possible against 1 defender. In the other half, the single attacker plays 1v1, attempting to score or to keep possession until attacking support is available. If the 2 attackers score, the player that did not shoot can quickly join the attacker playing 1v1 to create a 2v1 if the teammate still has possession. If the defenders win possession, they play a pass to the coach. Restart the activity with the same starting positions.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – With 2 games running concurrently, awareness of the other game progress is critical - discuss with players what decisions they can make to change this scenario. Emphasize how the urgency to attack and score is different at either end. The defensive challenges are of course opposite.
- + Coaching tips – Coach the attacker playing 1v1 to use different shielding techniques to maintain possession. For example, positioning the body to block the defender, rolling the ball with the sole of the foot and/or dribbling to space.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Work through a few different patterns with passive defenders.
- + More challenging: Increase the length of the area to practice shooting from greater distances. Allow the defender in the 2v1 game to recover and support their teammate and create 2v2. Add another attacker and defender to both ends to create 3v2 and 2v2. Establish a minimum number of passes before shooting. Add a coach to the 2v1 half of the field to call offsides.

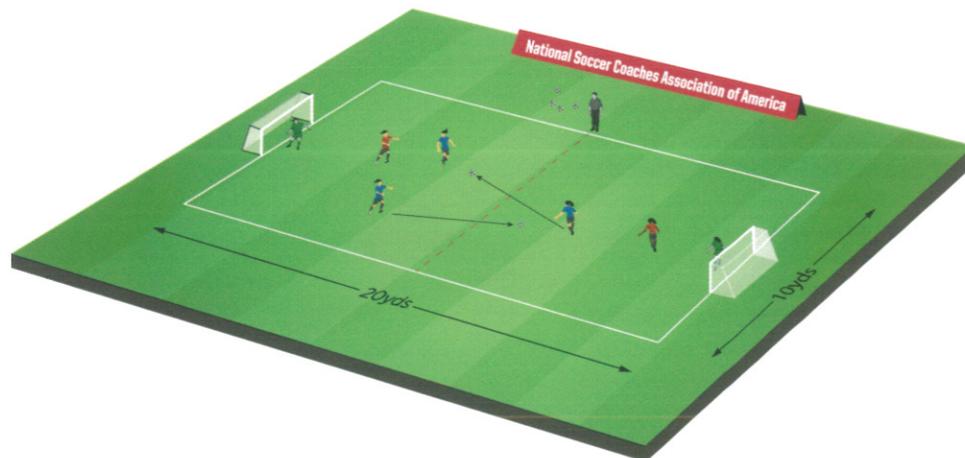
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

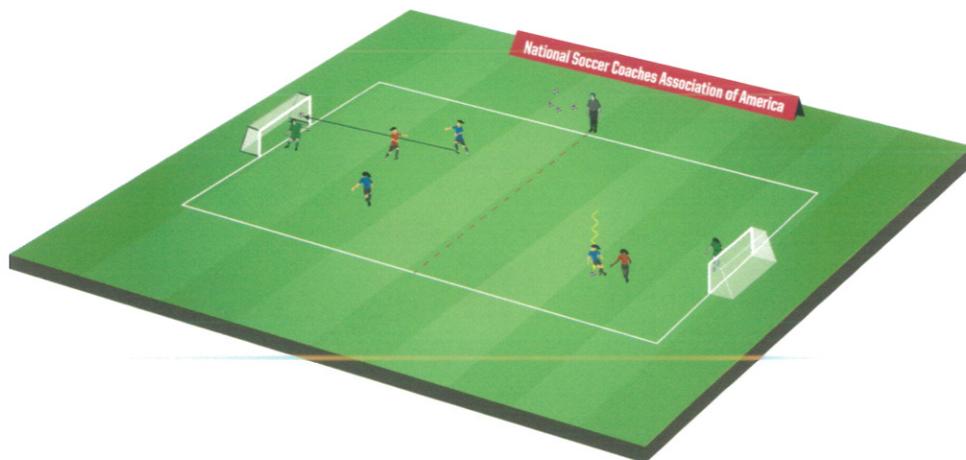
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

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

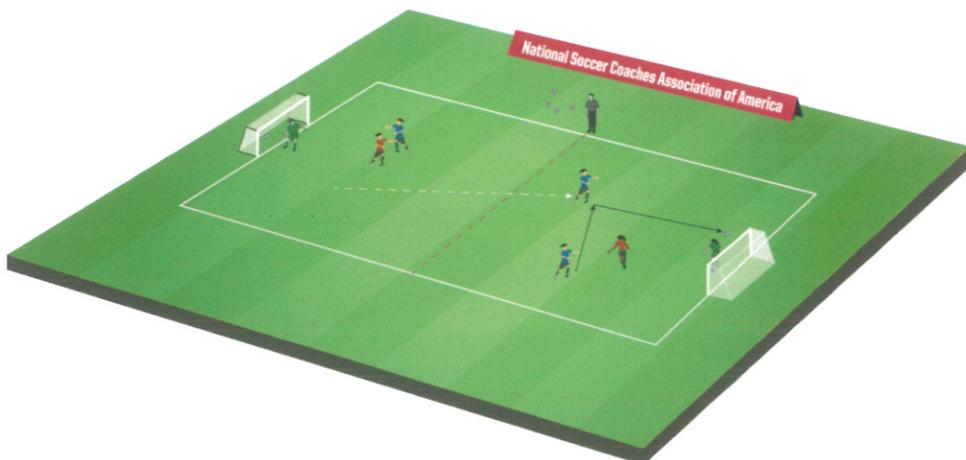
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, support, movement and scoring.



- + 2v1 in one half and 1v1 in the other half.
- + An attacker in each half starts the activity with a pass.
- + Attackers attempt to score past the defender and the goalkeeper.



- + The 2 blue attackers score quickly against the red defender.
- + The blue attacker - playing 1v1 - uses the space to create separation from the defender.
- + If the defenders win possession they must pass to the coach.



- + The support attacker in the 2v1 situation can support the attacker playing 1v1.
- + The 1v1 attacker is successful in establishing possession and is able to play a pass in the path of the support attacker.

# ONE TOUCH SHORT PASSING COMBINATIONS

## WHY USE IT

This is a 1 touch fast paced warm-up passing activity used to prepare the body and mind for training. As simple as the activity seems, the player must remain focused and technically precise.

## SET UP

The set up requires 3 cones, 5 players and a ball. Two cones are positioned adjacent to each other with a 1 yard space between and another cone is set a distance of 5 yards from the other cones.

## HOW TO PLAY

This activity requires quick thinking and supreme individual passing and receiving technique. Refer to the adjacent diagrams to better understand the passing and movement sequence. The activity is a sequence of one touch passes and complimentary movements between 5 players. At first expect regular mistakes, incorrect movement and inaccurate passing as the players start to grapple with the demands of the activity. After a few sessions a higher ability group should be able to perform with speed and rhythm. Set up multiple groups and play for 5 minutes before moving to the next activity.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - This is a great activity to work with players on their movement after passing the ball. Young players will often stand admiring their pass instead of moving into another position to provide support.
- + Coaching tips - It is not unreasonable for a coach to want to emulate fluent passing teams such as Barcelona and Bayern Munich. These teams spend hours on the training ground working with players to play out of tight and challenging environments. Youth coaches can similarly establish these environments in training.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Allow players to take 2 touches and increase the distance between the cones to 10 yards to provide players with more time.
- + More challenging: Reduce the distance between the cones to quicken the pace, insist on 1 touch passing combinations, stipulate which foot the players should use to make the pass and add double pass requirements.

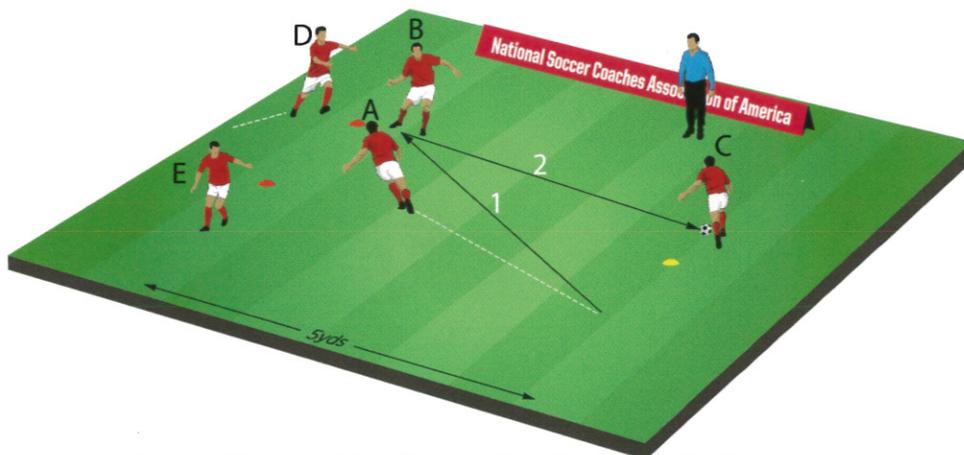
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

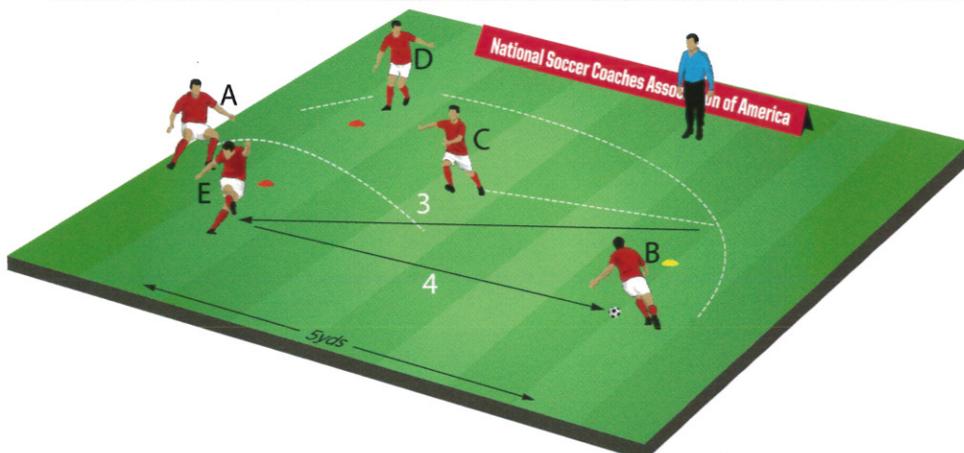
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

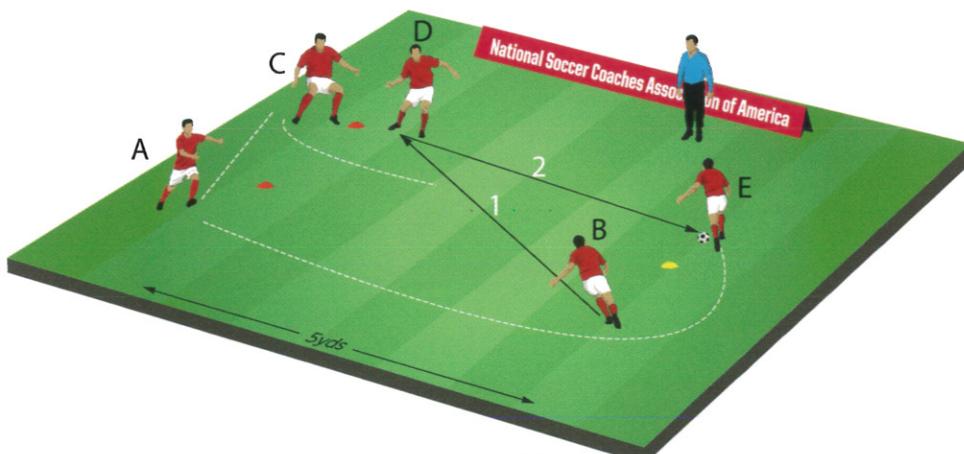
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving with the feet and movement.



- + Players A and C start either side of the yellow cone, 5 yards apart from 2 red cones.
- + Players B and E start on the outside of each of the red cones and player D stands between the red cones.
- + Player A passes to player B to the outside of the cone and player B plays a one touch pass to player C. As soon as player A makes the pass he/she should sprint up the middle towards the double cones.



- + On receipt of the ball, player C passes diagonally to player E to the outside of the cone and makes a run.
- + Meanwhile player B sprints around the single cone to receive the pass from player E and player D moves to fill the position vacated by player B. Player A is ready to step forward as soon as player E moves.



- + In the final diagram, Player E runs around the cone and A fills the vacant position.
- + The sequence starts again with all players in new positions.
- + The coach can alter the intensity by changing passing conditions and adjusting the distance between cones.

# 2V1 TO 7V5 OVERLAPS

## WHY USE IT

The third stage of development is an appropriate time to introduce various movement patterns to support the player on the ball. In this activity we use a part-whole methodology to introduce the overlap.

## SET UP

The set-up for the first sequence is a 20x15 yards rectangle with 2 attacking players against 1 defending player. The activity is then progressed to a small sided field with appropriate size goals at each end.

## HOW TO PLAY

To begin the coach isolates the skill, providing the attacking players with plenty of practice before adding additional challenges. An attacking player starts at one end with the ball and a second attacker is situated 8 yards along the sideline. The defender starts at the other end and can move forward to defend when the first pass is made. The attacker passes wide and on receipt of the ball the second attacker dribbles inside and towards the opponent's end of the field. The passer makes an overlap run and the dribbler attempts to pass into space. The defenders and attackers can score a point by stopping the ball close to the opponent's end line. Once the players are competent the coach can make this a functional/phase of play activity. The attacking team has a couple of neutral players in support and must make an overlap before scoring. The defenders are only allowed to send 2 players into the attacking half in an attempt to win the ball.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - To help young players understand when to make an overlap and to do so the coach must identify some of the visual cues. Firstly, there should be space on the outside and this is generally created by a player vacating the space on the dribble or by making a run. Secondly, the attacking team should have controlled and positive possession before a player leaves their defensive position.
- + Coaching tips - To give the attacking team the best opportunity to make overlap runs the coach can manage 2 variables: A) adding 2 additional attacking players and B) restrict the defending team to send 2 players into the attacking half.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Continue with the technical activity until players develop confidence and understanding. The coach can also prevent defenders entering the attacking half.
- + More challenging: Allow defenders to freely roam the field.

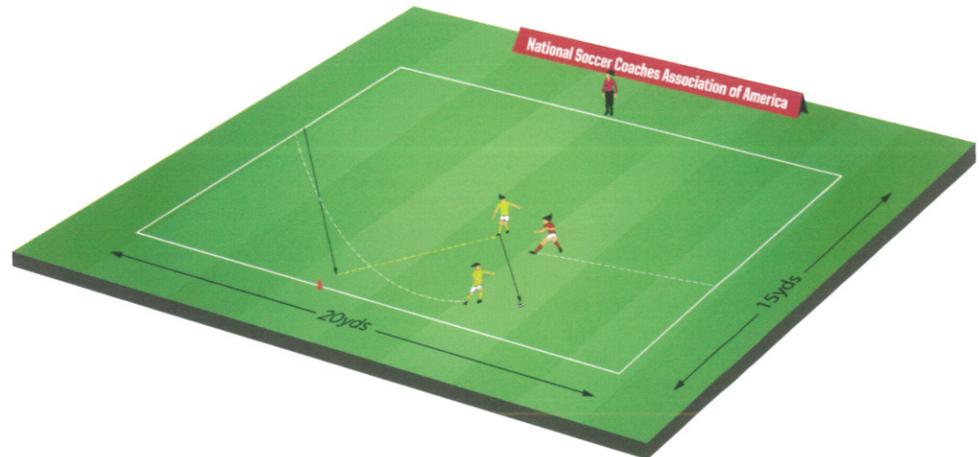
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

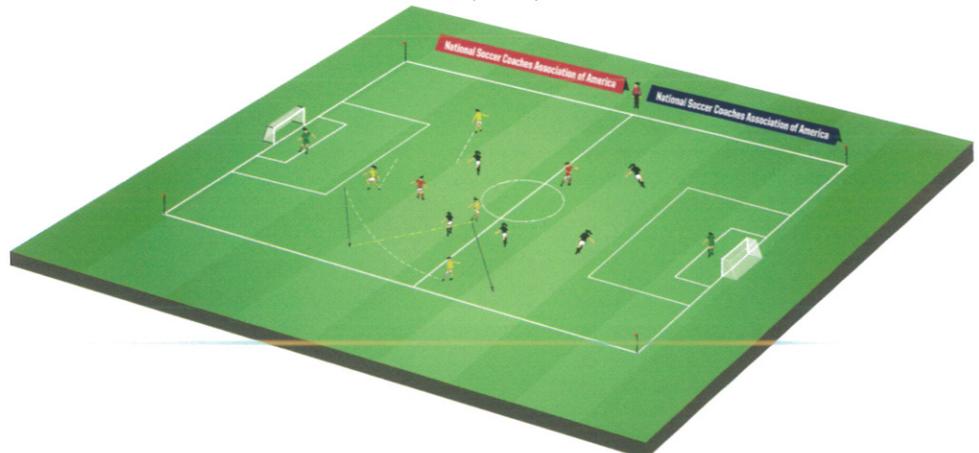
## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

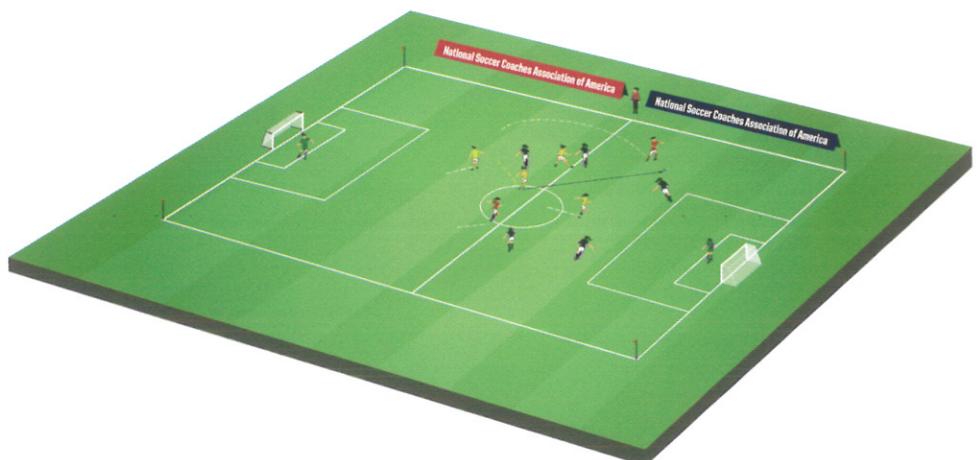
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving with the feet and movement.



- + In the first sequence the coach introduces players to the overlapping run by isolating the skill.
- + The yellow attacking player passes wide to the other attacking player who dribbles inside at the defender.
- + The yellow dribbler commits the defender and the yellow passing player makes a run behind. The overlap is effective and the attacker calls for the ball as space opens wide.



- + In the second sequence the activity is moved to a small sided field for a 5v2 game.
- + The yellow team must perform an overlap before scoring and can use the all-time offensive players.
- + The defenders are only allowed to send 2 players into the attacking half to allow the attackers more time.



- + In the final diagram the coach has lifted all the conditions other than the need to make an overlap.
- + The yellow team is conscious how to create overlap opportunities and an attacker dribbles inside.
- + The neutral player recognizes this movement and runs into the vacated space.

# ONE-UP AND ONE-DOWN

## WHY USE IT

This is a small sided game that can be used as the main theme or final activity. The focus is on attacking combinations and movement including over-lap and under-lap running, wall pass and possession passing.

## SET UP

The set-up is a 40x20 yards area with 2 teams of 5 players - numbered 1-5. A small goal is positioned centrally at both ends with a large supply of balls either side for quick restarts. There are no goalkeepers to start the game.

## HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the game is to score goals and in the process provide the team with a numerical advantage in attacking personnel. This is achieved by completing a combination or movement pattern determined by the coach. For example, if two players can make a wall pass around an opponent the coach calls out "1". The player with the corresponding number must leave the field and run around the opponent's goal before re-entering the game. As the player is off the field the attacking team have a numerical advantage and can either go for goal or attempt to play another combination to eliminate another opponent. There are a number of conditions the coach can employ to highlight the main theme of the session - see how to modify the game below. If a team scores the coach can allow the team conceding to start with a pass from their end of the field or the teams can reverse the attacking direction. In this eventuality all the players must be alert and the coach can add another challenge by insisting all the players on the conceding team run around the goal.

## COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with players to maintain width so space is available centrally to perform overlap and wall pass combinations.
- + Coaching tips - Requiring that a defensive player leave the field provides a momentary advantage to the attacking team and helps to create some urgency. The attacking team will want to recognize when the opponent is reorganizing and take advantage of any weaknesses.

## HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Play without a goalkeeper, reduce the number of players and add an all-time offensive player.
- + More challenging: Change the conditions for the attacking team, such as making an overlap, require 4 passes or add a touch restriction. The coach can also add a goalkeeper for each team and randomly call a number to reduce the number of defending players.

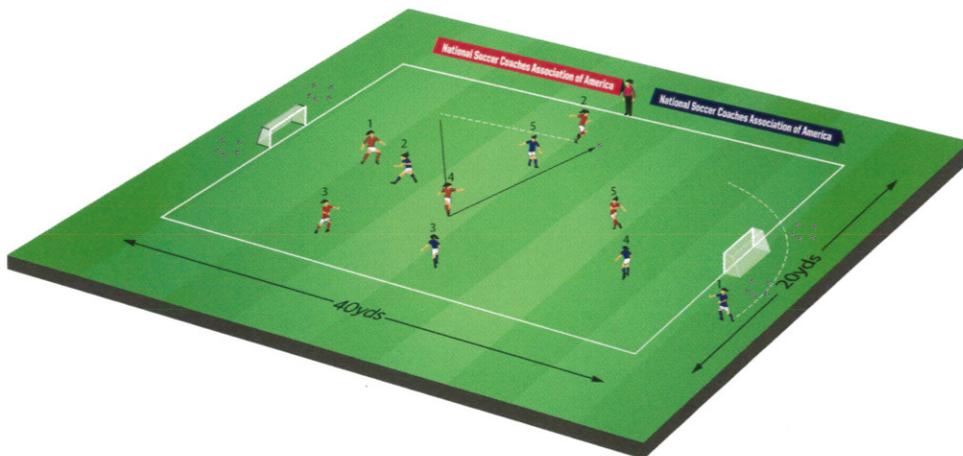
## STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

## THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing over short distances, receiving and movement off the ball.

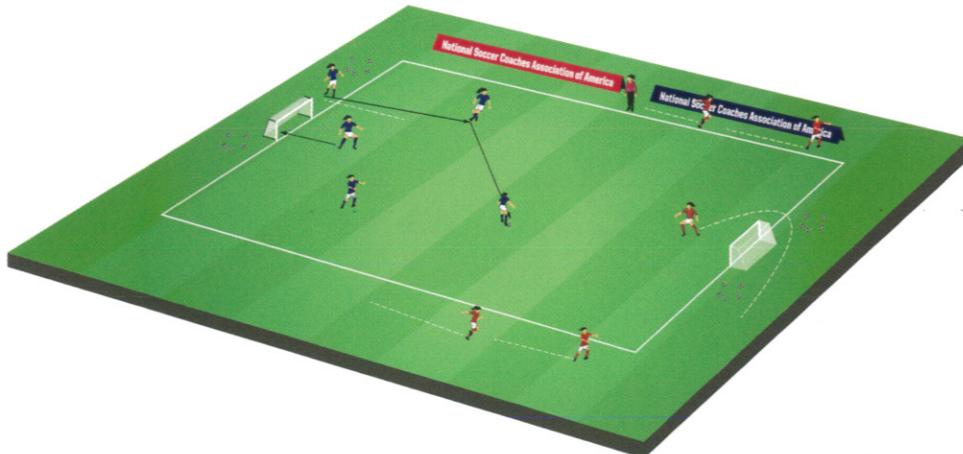
Top 3 competencies: Passing, receiving with the feet and movement.



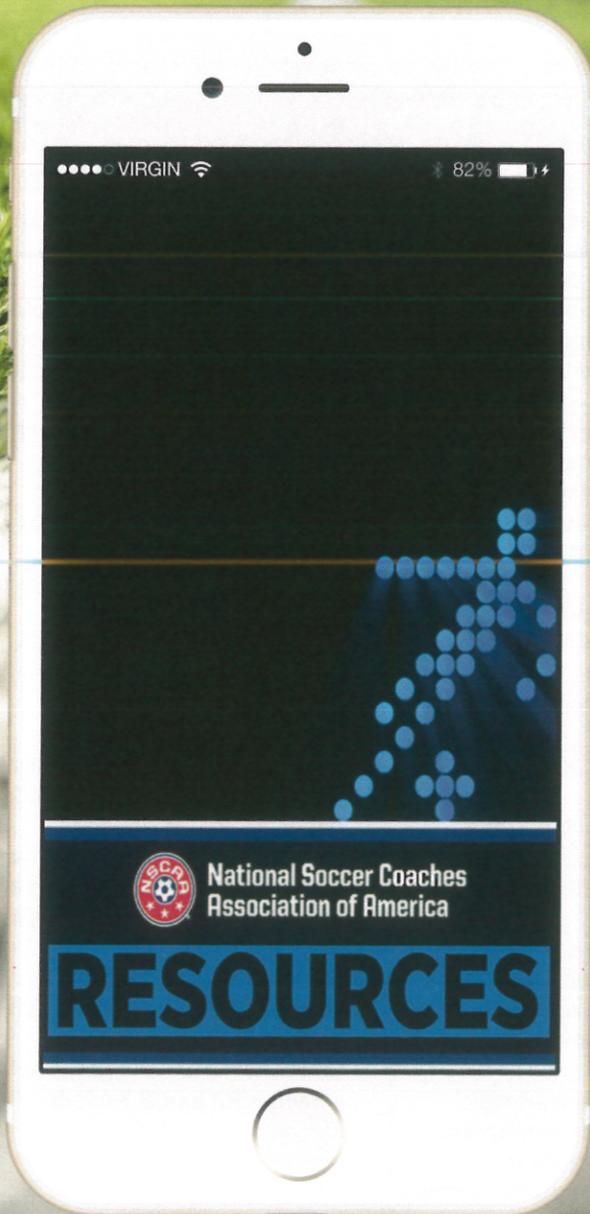
- + 5 players on each team are numbered 1-5 and are instructed to run around the opponent's call when called.
- + A couple of red attackers combine with a wall pass to play around a blue defender and the coach calls "1".
- + The blue team number 1 leaves the field and starts to run towards the red team goal. With a numerical advantage the red team must decide whether to attempt to score or to eliminate another defender.



- + In the second sequence the red team take an opportunity to eliminate 2 blue team players.
- + Firstly, a defender plays wide and the winger cuts inside on the dribble to create an overlap opportunity.
- + Secondly, the player making the overlap receives a return pass and makes a wall pass combination.



- + In the final diagram the blue team have scored and this changes the attacking direction for both teams.
- + Having conceded, all the red team players must sprint around the outside and run around the blue team goal.
- + Meanwhile the blue team must make at least 3 passes before they can shoot at goal.



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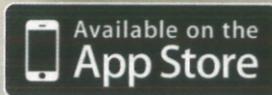


National Soccer Coaches  
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## RESOURCES



National Soccer Coaches  
Association of America



## STAGE 4 - ADOLESCENCE/LATE PUBERTY (12-14 YEARS OLD)

Dramatic physical changes are the hallmark of adolescence. Late stage 3 and early stage 4, there will be noticeable differences occurring in the growth of girls in comparison to boys. Girls (12 years) generally experience peak growth approximately two years ahead of boys (14 years). Since many young adolescents are unaware that the onset and rate of puberty vary greatly, they need reassurance that their own growth and development is normal, and they will benefit from learning about the progression of physiological changes. Most 12-year-olds focus on social life, friends and school and they continue friendships with members of the same sex. Coaches must be sensitive to close friendships when selecting teams and generally working with children in stage 4 – emotional changes can enhance sensitivity and lead to conflicts between players and between players and adults.

### DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- On average, girls reach Peak Height Velocity (PHV) in Stage 4. Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.
- Continue to consolidate the performance of fundamental and advanced individual skills.
- Players should receive more in-depth tactical instructions, particularly in understanding playing positions. Players should continue to experience different positions on the field.
- Optimum time for the introduction of Strength training for girls (immediately following PHV)
- A second speed training window opens for girls (11-13 years)
- The second speed training window opens for boys (13-16 years)
- Players should play other sports, but soccer should be the primary sport during the soccer season for the serious and committed.

### KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 4

| Physically   | Psychological/Social   | Cognitive/Mental  |
|--|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boys – Stage 4 is the most likely time when boys start going through puberty.</li> <li>Girls – late developers start puberty at this stage but for many girls the later stage is the conclusion of puberty.</li> <li>Significant proportional changes occur in bone, muscle and fat.</li> <li>Extremities grow quicker than the trunk resulting in a gangling appearance.</li> <li>Decreases in flexibility occur.</li> <li>Oxygen transportation is greatly improved due to increased production of red blood cells – aiding aerobic energy production.</li> <li>The nervous system is almost fully developed.</li> <li>Displays rapid but uneven physical growth, leading at times to awkwardness, uncoordinated movement, tiredness, lack of confidence and poor posture.</li> <li>Increase in female and male hormone levels</li> <li>Increase in height, weight and musculature.</li> <li>Males develop deeper voices, characteristic patterns of facial/body hair become stronger.</li> <li>Females become wider at hips; breast development continues for several years.</li> <li>Girls may reach close to physical maturity.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emotional development may not correlate to physical development – physical changes may occur earlier and develop more rapidly.</li> <li>Continued development of independence, yet wants and needs adult help.</li> <li>Players may start to question coaches and parents more readily and become less accepting - Less affection may be shown toward adults and players may sometimes seem rude or short tempered.</li> <li>Hormones become more active and can lead to mood swings and behavioral fluctuations.</li> <li>Players are more interested in and influenced by peer group - Increasingly concerned about acceptance by friends.</li> <li>Peer group becomes increasingly important in fostering independence and interaction with members of the opposite sex.</li> <li>Players become more concerned about body image, looks and clothes.</li> <li>Focus on self, going back and forth between high expectations and lack of confidence.</li> <li>Eating problems sometimes start at this stage – resulting in reduced energy and poor performance.</li> <li>Shows tolerance of needs and abilities of others.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Players are able to think abstractly, and are able to contribute to critical thinking</li> <li>Player can become more egotistical – resulting in increased awareness of personal performance successes and failures.</li> <li>A heightened sense of personal achievement and striving for perfection/success.</li> <li>Players have more capabilities for complex thought.</li> <li>Better able to express feelings through talking.</li> <li>A stronger sense of right and wrong.</li> <li>Ready for in-depth, longer learning experiences.</li> <li>Has a continuing need for reinforcement and development of self-esteem, especially in relation to body perception and sport.</li> <li>Increasingly capable of making informed decisions and accepting a leadership role, although often may choose not to do so.</li> <li>Requires opportunities to be creative and may need consistent encouragement.</li> <li>Can concentrate and participate in activities for longer periods of time.</li> </ol> |