

DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS TRANSLATED TO COACHING PLAYERS IN STAGE 4

Developing a team of players with large individual performance differences can create significant headaches for coaches. Pressure to prepare a team to compete against teams from different towns can often overshadow the needs of individual players. There is still a considerable amount for the players to learn as they are exposed to advanced techniques and team tactics. Players entering Stage 4 with competency in the basic skills are well placed to develop quickly. The hours spent developing individual mastery of the ball will pay dividends as the coach introduces activities where solid techniques are prerequisites for success.

TRANSLATED TO PLAYER DEVELOPMENT THIS MEANS

1. Provide players with a variety of experiences by coaching them how to play a number of positions.
2. Educate players on the physical, cognitive and emotional changes occurring.
3. Dynamic stretches prior to activity and static stretches following – flexibility naturally deteriorates so efforts must be made to regain range of motion.
4. Players should be given opportunity to play and train with others of similar ability.
5. Conditions for aerobic training are right – increasing aerobic capacity will allow players to perform high intensity (anaerobic) activities more frequently and recovery will be quicker.
6. As the nervous system becomes refined, performing correct technique is essential.
7. Continue to focus on individual ball mastery.
8. Tactical focus must be determined based on readiness of the individuals.
9. Players should be exposed to different positions and different roles.
10. Psychological training can be introduced such as coping strategies and mental imagery.
11. Bear in mind that early and late development has different implications for males and females.
12. Sessions should reinforce communication as an essential team skill.
13. Involve players in decision making and analysis of individual and team performance.
14. Create opportunities for team building.
15. Work with the players on attack and defensive strategies.
16. Speak to parents to ensure they understand and support the training methods employed.
17. Players should be working on flexibility, speed, endurance and strength – strength activities should be using their own body weight, Swiss Balls and Medicine Balls.
18. The first training window for speed and strength for female players occurs immediately after peak height velocity.
19. The only training window for speed and strength for male players opens 12-18 months after peak height velocity.

ACTIVITIES LISTING FOR STAGE 4: PLAYERS 12-14 YEARS OLD

- 93 COMBINED PLAY AND FINISHING IN THE PENALTY AREA 1**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and shooting technique.
- 94 COMBINED PLAY AND FINISHING IN THE PENALTY AREA 2**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and shooting technique.
- 95 2V1 TEAM SHOOTING COMPETITION**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Attacking combinations around the box, creating space and shooting.
- 96 QUICK FIRE 6V6**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, defending in units and shooting .
- 97 7V7 DEEP COUNTER**
+ Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, counter attacking and defending in transition.
- 98 PLAYING OUT OF TROUBLE 7V4 TO 8V5**
+ Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Build-up play, possession, passing and receiving.
- 99 BUILD-UP POSSESSION PLAY 8V8**
+ Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Build-up play, possession, passing and receiving.
- 100 ATTACKING BUILD-UP AND OVERLOAD 7V6**
+ Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, counter attacking and defending in transition.
- 101 ATTACKING FULL BACK SUPPORT**
+ Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, attacking with width and defending in units.
- 102 BUILD-UP OPTIONS 7V4 TO 8V6**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Goalkeeper distribution, attacking with width and creating space.
- 103 10 POINTS POSSESSION GAME**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, small group possession and small group defending.
- 104 5V5 TO 7V7 POSSESSION BREAKOUT**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, small group possession and small group defending.
- 105 SMALL GROUP POSSESSION PATTERNS**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Build-up play, possession, passing and receiving.
- 106 3 ZONE POSSESSION - 3V1 TO 4V2**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Build-up play, possession, passing and receiving.
- 107 DOUBLE GOAL CHALLENGE - 4V4+2 TO 7V7+2**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Passing combinations, passing, receiving and defending in transition.
- 108 4 SQUARE KEEP BALL 3V3V3**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Passing combinations, passing and receiving and defending in transition.
- 109 CHIP IT 5V3**
+ Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Passing technique, creating space and defending in transition.
- 110 LONG BALL COMPETITION**
+ Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Passing technique, receiving and creating space.
- 111 CHANGING THE POINT OF ATTACK 5V5+4 TO 9V9**
+ Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Passing combinations, passing and receiving and attacking in transition.
- 112 2 BALL PASSING COMPETITION**
+ Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players
+ Top 3 themes: Passing combinations, long passing and defending.

COMBINED PLAY AND FINISHING IN THE PENALTY AREA 1

WHY USE IT

This is a functional training activity focusing on link play between the central midfield players and the striker. As simple as the activity seems, top strikers will practice for hours with the midfield players, so movement patterns and combinations become almost instinctive.

SET UP

The activity occurs in and around the penalty box with a striker starting 2-3 yards outside the area and 2 midfield players starting 15 yards further from goal. A goalkeeper protects an appropriately sized goal.

HOW TO PLAY

The midfield players start the activity with a pass. The coach can work on numerous simple and complex routines, but it is important the striker and midfield players are on the same page. Work with the striker to create space for a shot. As the ball is passed from one midfield player to another, the striker should move away from the receiving player and after 3-4 steps, quickly turn back to receive an oncoming pass. The players can work on a variety of ball and player movement sequences and they should devise a way to communicate with each other which move is the most effective.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - To maintain game intensity, strikers should shoot first time. Teach strikers to use feints and disguise to unbalance the goalkeeper before shooting. Movement away and cutting to the ball prior to the pass should be realistic in order to create separation from defenders. Also look over the shoulder whilst in motion and adjust body shape. Don't forget to finish rebounds.
- + Coaching tips - Verbal and non-verbal communication between older players is important to practice. In this activity the speed and weight of the pass, the direction of the pass in relationship to the strikers movement and the use of simple commands such as "TURN", "MAN-ON" and "TIME" should be rehearsed.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

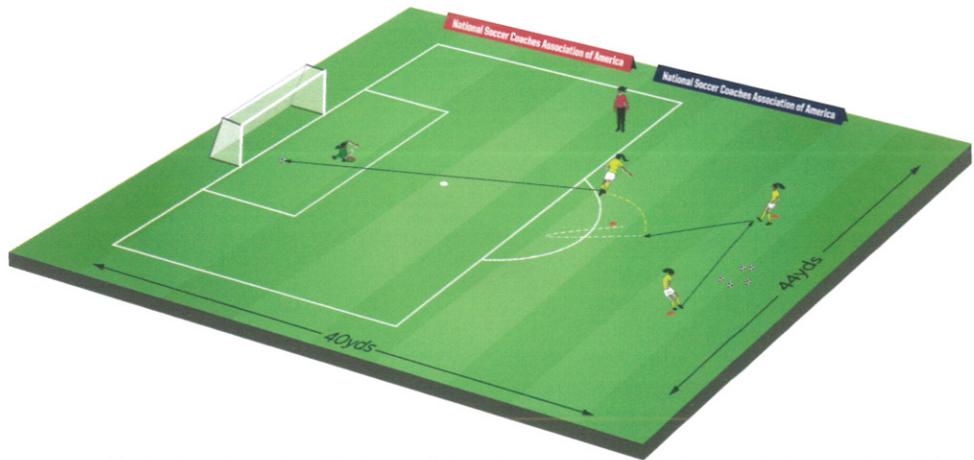
- + Less challenging: Restrict the pattern to 1-2 different options to begin and move the starting positions closer to the goal. The coach can also start without a goalkeeper.
- + More challenging: Add additional combinations between the servers and attackers. Add a 1 touch restriction. Add a passive defender.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

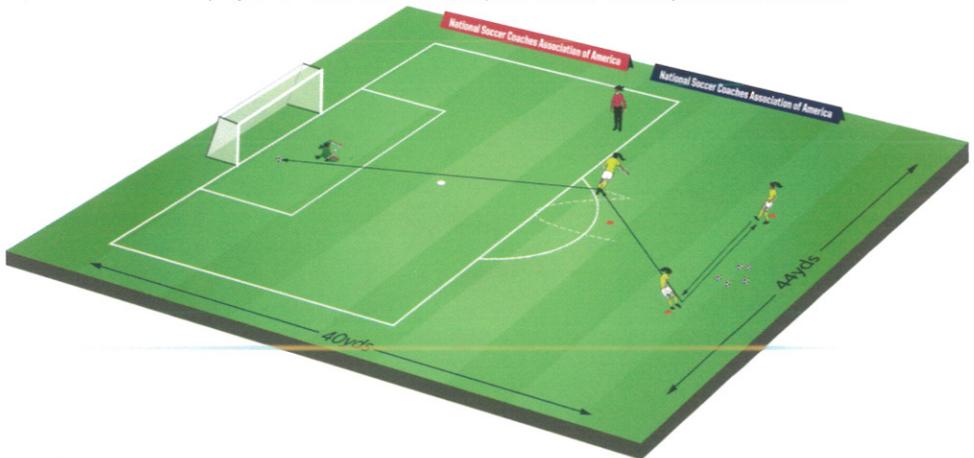
Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

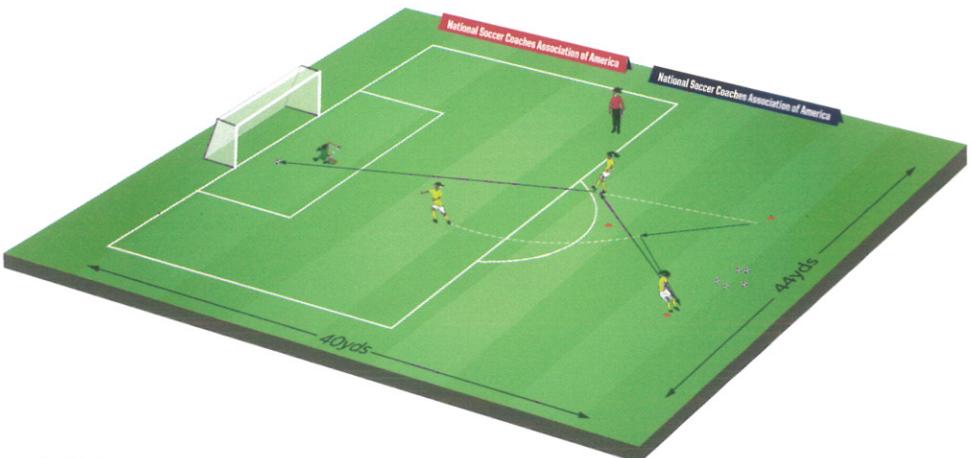
Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and shooting technique.
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, support, movement and scoring.



- + 2 servers stand 10 yards apart and 15-20 yards from the top of the penalty box with a supply of balls.
- + A striker starts with his/her back to goal approximately 3 yards off the top of the box.
- + A midfield player (server) passes square to another midfield player and the striker moves away to create space. As the ball is played towards the striker, he/she cuts to the ball, turns and shoots.



- + In this sequence the midfield players play a wall pass.
- + The striker initially moves away from the receiving player and as the ball is returned the striker makes a secondary movement across the box. A pass is made across the 'face' of the cone (defender) for a shot.



- + In the final sequence the striker checks to the ball to make space behind the defender (cone).
- + The striker passes the ball back to the midfield player and 'spins' away from the ball to open a space behind.
- + The other midfield player continues the run and an interchange between midfield players results in a goal.

COMBINED PLAY AND FINISHING IN THE PENALTY AREA 2

WHY USE IT

Dedicating practice time to improving a team's finishing is well directed. This simple shooting practice works through different patterns and combinations in and around the penalty area.

SET UP

Half a field with an appropriate size goal.
4 servers, 2 near the halfway line and 2 on the goal line with several balls. 2 attackers start goal width apart at the top of the penalty box.

HOW TO PLAY

The attacking players initiate the practice. One attacker creates space by moving towards the goal and then cutting back to receive a diagonal pass from the server. The servers must be ready and as the movement occurs, the ball should be delivered into the path of the attacker. The attacker plays a backward pass to the 2nd server. The 2nd attacker creates space by spinning towards the touchline and cutting diagonally towards the penalty spot. As the attacker spins away, the server delivers a pass into the attacker's path for a first time shot. At the same time, a server from the goal line passes diagonally to the on-rushing first attacker. Finally, the second attacker receives a pass from the other goal line server for a shot.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – To maintain game intensity, strikers should shoot first time. Teach strikers to use feints and disguise to unbalance the goalkeeper before shooting. Movement away and cutting to the ball prior to the pass should be realistic in order to create separation from defenders. Also look over the shoulder whilst in motion and adjust body shape. Don't forget to finish rebounds.
- + Coaching tips – Pattern play is an incredibly useful coaching method, but it is most effective if players participate at game speed. Insist on optimal intensity and add opponents once the players understand the pattern.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Move starting positions closer towards the goal.
- + More challenging: Add additional combinations between servers and the attackers. Add a 1 touch restriction. At first add a couple of passive defenders and then play fully opposed.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

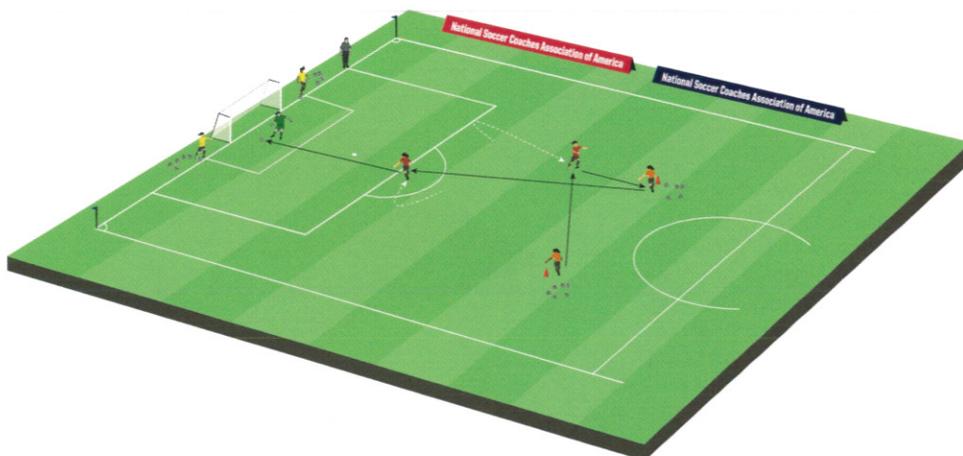
Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 6-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

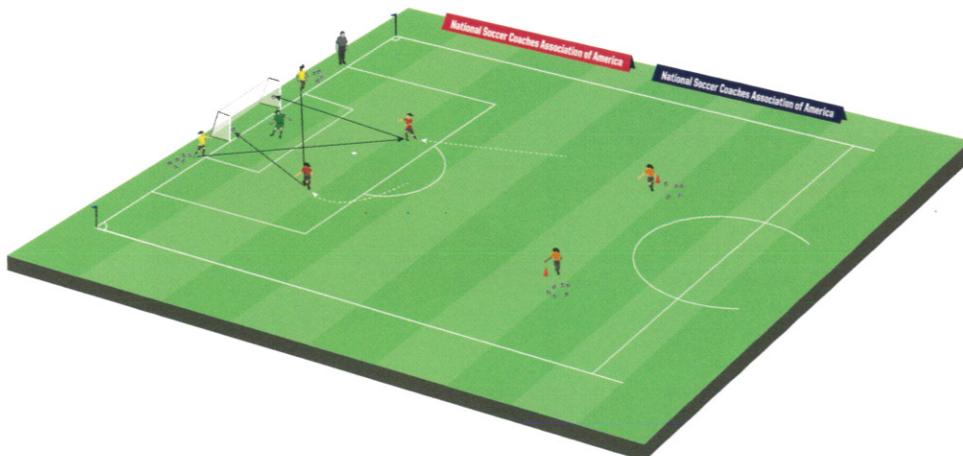
Top 3 themes: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and shooting technique.
Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, support, movement and scoring.



- + 2 servers stand 10 yards inside the half with a supply of balls.
- + 2 servers stand adjacent to the goal with a supply of balls.
- + 2 attacking players start a few yards outside the area approximately goal width apart.



- + The attackers initiate the movement - 1 attacker cutting towards the servers near halfway.
- + A diagonal ball is played as the attacker cuts and a combination with the 2nd server results in a through pass being made into the path of the other attacker for a first time shot at goal.



- + The first attacker sprints into the box and receives a diagonal pass from the server on the goal line.
- + The second server also follows in for another shot.
- + Both attackers must be ready to finish rebounds.

2V1 TEAM SHOOTING COMPETITION

WHY USE IT

A fast paced shooting activity with 2 teams playing concurrently at either end of the field. Excellent opportunity for attacking players to develop confidence in front of goal, defenders to work on closing down space and goalkeepers to make spectacular saves.

SET UP

40x20 yards sectioned into 2 fields with a 2 yards zone in between with 5 balls for each attacking team. 2 attacking players from each team start adjacent to the middle zone and 4 defenders are positioned on the side and end lines.

HOW TO PLAY

On the coach's command, play commences with one of the attacking players entering the center zone to retrieve a ball. The coach immediately calls a number and the defender with the corresponding number runs onto the field to prevent the attackers from scoring. If the defender wins the ball and can make a successful pass to a team mate on the side of the field, the attacking pair lose a point. If the attackers score they gain a point. The attackers immediately collect another ball from the center zone and the defender returns to the sideline. The coach calls another number and play continues. Each team has 5 attacks, then rotate attackers and defenders.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Attackers must be alert from which direction the defensive pressure is coming and make decisions on and off the ball to utilize the space quickly. Before shooting at goal, the attackers should assess the position and readiness of the goal keeper. Attackers and defenders must be ready to follow in blocked shots.
- + Coaching tips – Differentiation - adjusting the difficulty based on the ability of the players is key to great coaching. Can you manipulate variables in an activity to adjust the difficulty for each player?

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Delay calling the defender's number to provide the attacker with more time. Add a 3rd attacker to play 3v1.
- + More challenging: Call 2 defenders at one time, or build up defenders each round by instructing the defenders to stay on the field once their number has been called. Add a pass number requirement and/or touch restriction.

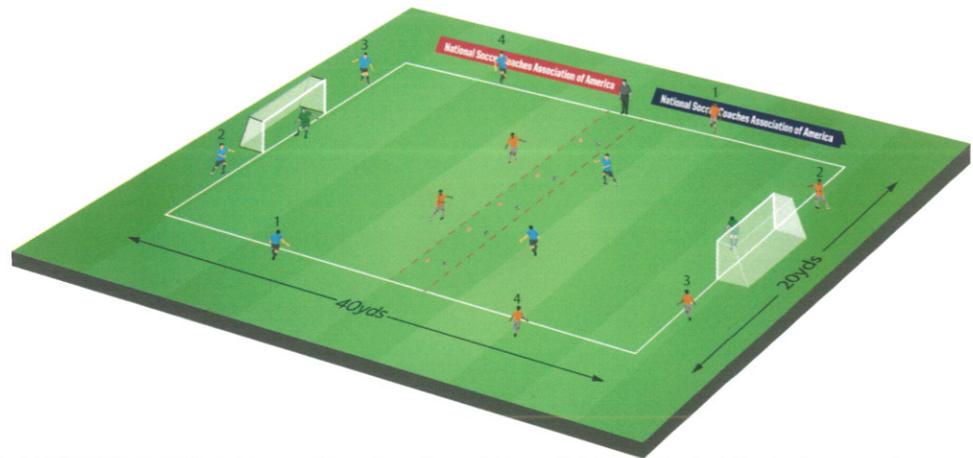
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking combinations around the box, creating space and shooting.

Top 3 competencies: Passing and receiving, finishing and defending pressure.



- + 4 defenders at each end are positioned on the end line and sideline. Each defender has a number.
- + 2 attackers start near the center of the field and have 5 balls to choose from to start the game.
- + The coach starts the practice shouting out a defender's number.



- + The defender enters the area and prepares to play 1v2.
- + One attacker enters the center zone and collects a ball. The attacker can pass, dribble or shoot.
- + In this illustration both groups of attackers have made the space big and combined for a goal.



- + Once a goal is scored, the ball leaves the field or the defender wins possession, the attackers reset.
- + 2 new defenders are called and the game is now 2v2.
- + Pressure is now coming from multiple angles so the attackers need to sense the pressure and play quickly.

QUICK FIRE 6V6

WHY USE IT

This activity is designed to place all players within shooting distance of the opponents goal. Players are encouraged to find a yard of space and take the opportunity to shoot. The coach can work on combinations between midfield and forward players in a challenging environment close to goal.

SET UP

The set-up is an area the width of the penalty box and the depth of 2 penalty boxes. An appropriate size goal is placed at both ends and a line of cones is placed from each goal post to the halfway line. A supply of balls are at the side of both goals for the keepers to restart. To begin play 4 defenders vs 1 attacker in each penalty box.

HOW TO PLAY

The activity starts with distribution from a goalkeeper to any of the 4 defensive players. The defenders attempt to find space in their end of the field and shoot at the opponent's goal. The solitary attacker attempts to win the ball from the 4 defenders and at the very least, minimize the time and space the defenders have to shoot. In the first sequence the players must stay in their half of the field with all shots at goal from the defensive end. The attacker must be alert and can score from blocked shots and rebounds.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – The coach must encourage players to open their body, take a good set-up touch and shoot when they have an opportunity. This is a great way to develop confidence in front of goal.
- + Coaching tips – Use cones in this activity to narrow the field so the central midfield players are in starting positions realistic to the game. Compact defending in and around the penalty area is commonplace and the attacking players can work on combinations around the box and longer shots from outside.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Play 3v0 in each zone to begin so the players are not rushed to shoot. The coach can also reduce the distance from the goal if players are struggling for power.
- + More challenging: Increase the challenge in each area to 3v2 and eventually allow a free movement between each half. Add a touch and/or pass restriction for one or both teams.

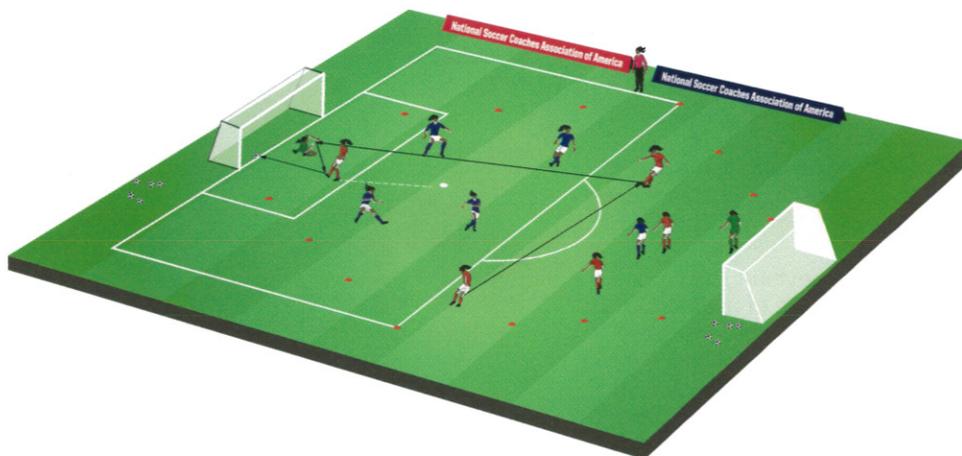
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

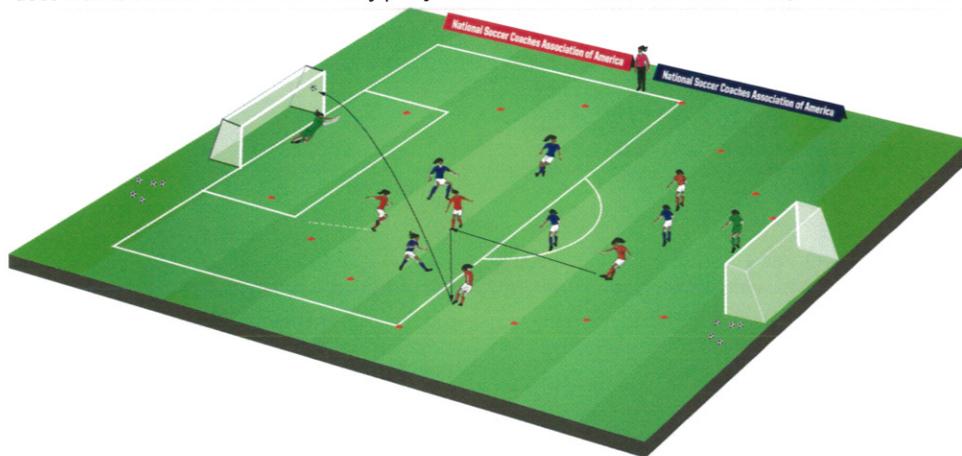
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, defending in units and shooting.

Top 3 competencies: Passing over short and medium distances, creating space and finishing.



- + The area is the size of 2 penalty boxes back-to-back, with 4v1 and a goalkeeper in each half of the field.
- + The red team start with possession and the goalkeeper distributes the ball to one of the 4 defenders.
- + Reds easily find space and a combination between 2 players results in a long shot at goal. The goalkeeper does well to save the shot but can only parry the ball to the feet of the striker to tap in the rebound.



- + The coach has now progressed the activity to playing 3v2 and a goalkeeper in each half of the field.
- + The reds combine again, but this time a pass is made into the feet of one of the strikers checking to the ball.
- + The striker sets up a shot with a neat pass to the defender who curves a beauty into the top corner.



- + In the final sequence, the coach has permitted the team in possession to move freely between areas.
- + The blue goalkeeper distributes to the defender who finds a striker in space at the far post.
- + The striker hits a first time volley past the keeper and 2 other blue players are ready for the rebound.

7V7 DEEP COUNTER

WHY USE IT

Transition and counter attacking play are popular topics for coaches working with players at all levels of the game. This activity assists a coach in organizing the team offensively and defensively when the ball is turned over.

SET UP

80x40 yards. The field is separated into 3 zones - 2x20 yards and a 40 yards zone. To begin, a goalkeeper is the only player permitted in the 1st 20 yard zone, 4v4 in the 2nd 20 yard zone and 2v2 with a goalkeeper in the larger zone. A supply of balls are on both sides of the field near the halfway line. The coach needs a stopwatch.

HOW TO PLAY

Play commences with a long pass/shot from a red defender to the goalkeeper from the larger zone of the field. The pass/shot represents a turnover of possession and as soon as the goalkeeper receives the ball the coach starts the stopwatch. The yellow team have 10 seconds to score at the other end. Yellow defenders can drop into the defensive zone when the goalkeeper receives the ball. This is an uncontested zone - no red player can enter the zone when yellows are in possession. Attacking play must be quick. The defending players must remain in the zone that they started. The goalkeeper can play direct, missing out the center zone by distributing the ball to the 2 attacking players in the larger zone. However, if the ball travels into the attacking zone, 2 yellow players can enter to create a 4v2. If the red defenders win possession in any zone, they have 6 seconds to counter and score against yellows. One red player can enter into the 20 yard end zone to score.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - This is a terrific environment to work on attacking and defending attitudes and organization. Can a long forward pass catch a disorganized defense, or is a short pass to gain controlled possession work better?
- + Coaching tips - Adding a time limit can create game pressures and conditions.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Increase counter attack time and/or play 5v5.
- + More challenging: Reduce the counter attacking time, impose a touch/pass restriction and allow free movement of players.

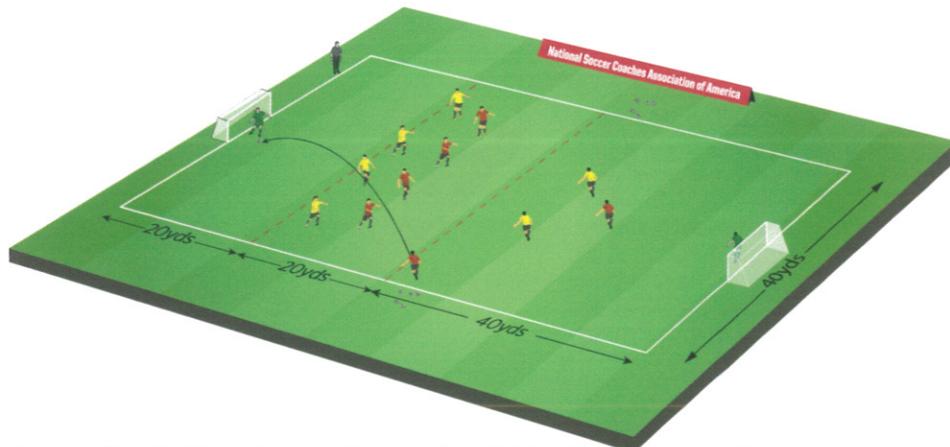
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

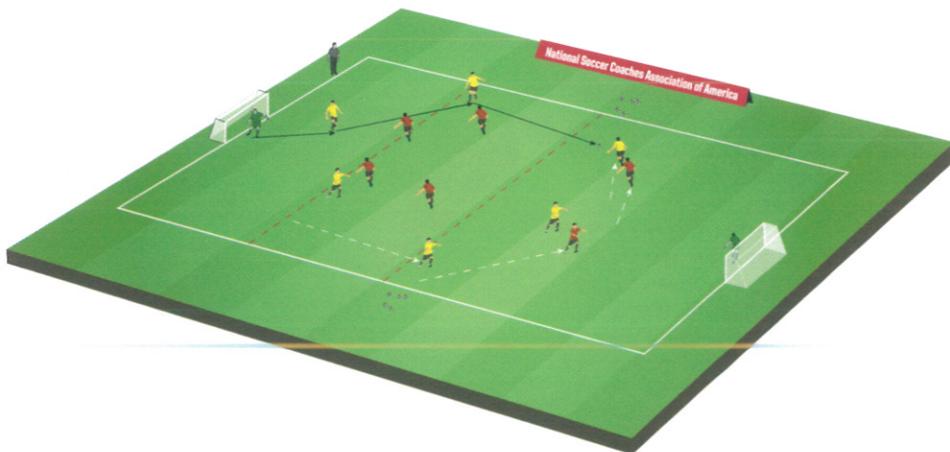
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, counter attacking and defending in transition.

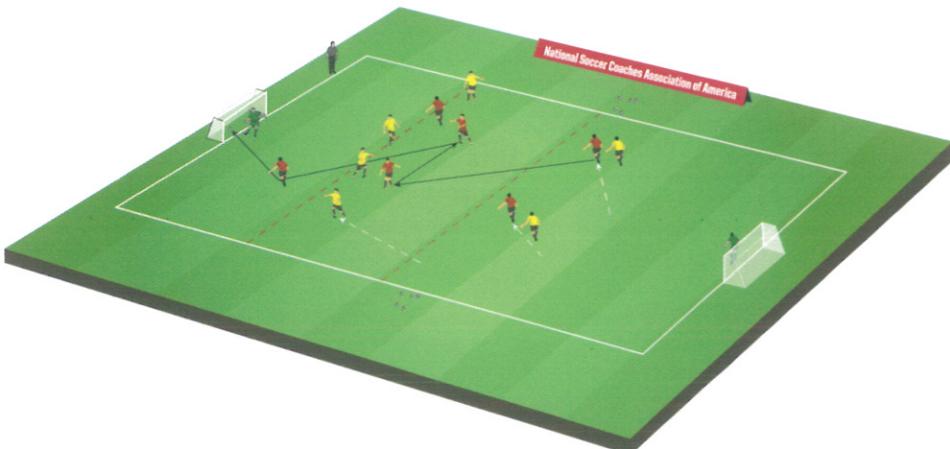
Top 3 competencies: Passing over medium and long distances, creating team space & finishing.



- + 3 zones - Zone 1 with goalkeeper only. Zone 2 - 4v4. Zone 3 - 2v2 plus a goalkeeper.
- + Activity commences with a long pass/shot from the larger zone to the goalkeeper from either side.
- + When the goalkeeper catches the ball, yellow players only can drop into the defensive zone.



- + The yellow team has 10 seconds to score. If they do not, the game restarts.
- + If the yellows progress the ball to the offensive zone, 2 yellow players can join the attack to create 4v2.
- + The red players are restricted to the zone they started the activity from.



- + Reds have intercepted the ball and must attempt to score within 6 seconds of the turnover.
- + Quick passing combinations release a red player into the end zone for 1v1 against the goalkeeper.
- + The yellow defender supporting the attack has to recover quickly to regain defensive positioning.

PLAYING OUT OF TROUBLE 7V4 TO 8V5

WHY USE IT

An attacking dilemma presented to coaches is whether to instruct the defenders to play stylishly and maintain possession out of the backfield or to play direct and clear their lines. The risk-reward of both solutions require careful consideration and must involve the technical and tactical abilities of the personnel.

SET UP

40x20 yards area with a 5 yards zone at each end and the central zone split into two 15x20 yards areas. 7 attacking players against 4 defenders to begin with an attacking target in each end zone, 3v2 in favor of the attackers in the defensive zone and 2v2 in the attacking zone. Two small goals are placed at one end to provide the defending team with a counter attacking option.

HOW TO PLAY

Playing out of the back and building up possession from the defensive end into the midfield takes time, repetition and adequate technical abilities of the players. To begin, the central defender located in the end zone can pass to either of the 3 teammates in the adjacent zone. The end zone is uncontested and players are permitted to play back to the central defender when they receive pressure from behind. Fullbacks should spread the field and open their body to play forward. The objective is for the 3 attacking players to pass into the attacking zone and create an overload of attackers. A pass to the target player earns one point. If the defending team wins possession they can counter attack and score in either of the small goals.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – The primary objective is to develop the confidence of the defending players to retain possession and to play out from the back into the midfield. Support players should play with width and depth.
- + Coaching tips – The reward for playing out from the back is to maintain possession of the ball. The risk is losing possession to the opponent close to goal. To reduce the risk the defenders should 'tuck in' centrally if they are not directly involved in the play.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: To provide the opportunity for the attackers to develop confidence begin with one defender in each zone and gradually add players.
- + More challenging: Add more defenders to eventually play with numbers even.

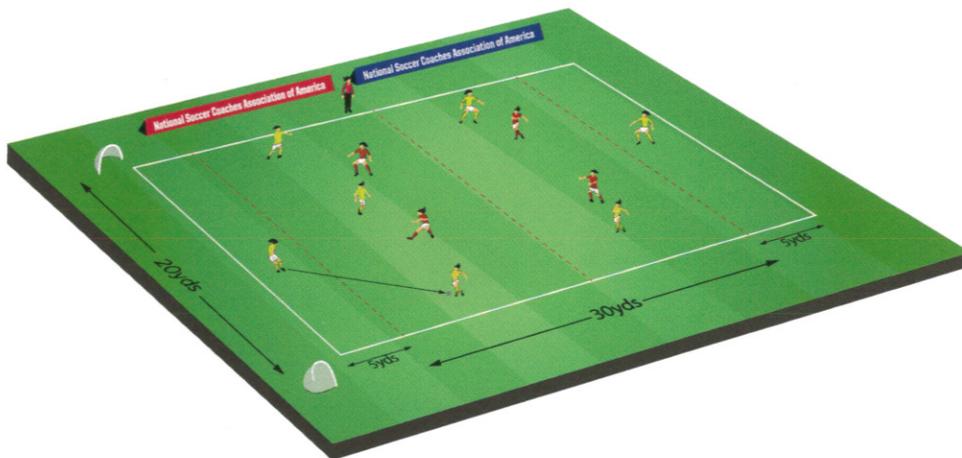
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

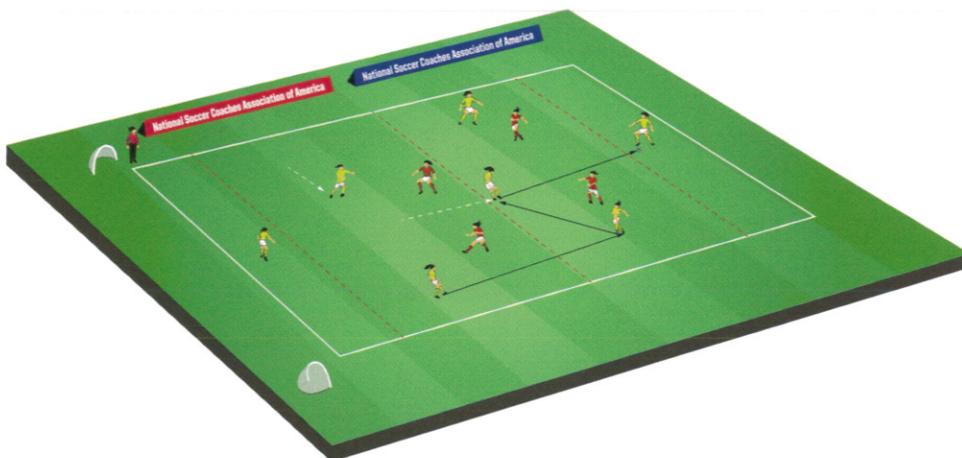
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Build-up play, possession, passing and receiving.

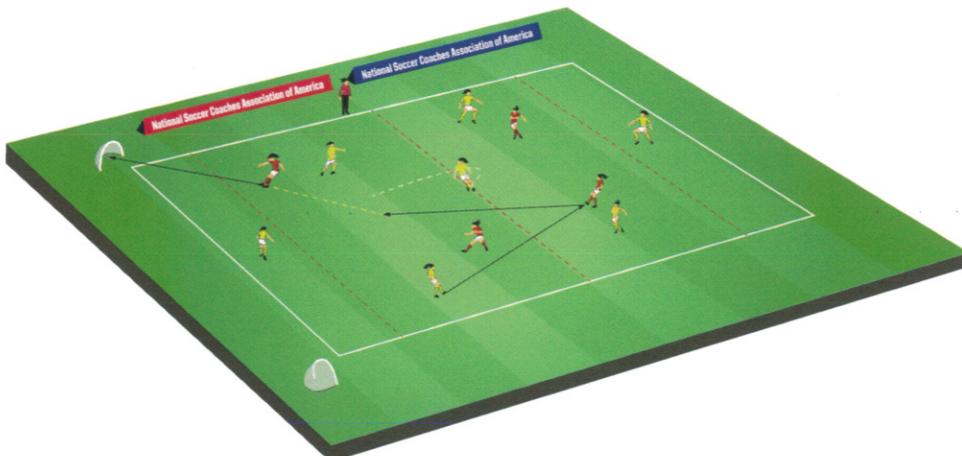
Top 3 competencies: Passing over medium distances, transition, attacking and defending.



- + The two full backs spread wide to receive a pass from the central defender.
- + The central defender for yellows starts the attack with a pass to the full back.
- + The yellows attempt to pass the ball out from the back.



- + The right side full back passes to the midfielder in the attacking zone.
- + The midfielder player has solid possession and the central defender steps forward to receive a pass.
- + The left full back tucks inside to provide cover for the central defender.



- + In this sequence the reds win possession after an errant pass from the back.
- + The central defender for yellows makes a poor decision to step forward and leaves space to exploit.
- + To compound the issue, the left full back for yellows does not tuck in and reds counter and score.

BUILD-UP POSSESSION PLAY 8V8

WHY USE IT

The coach works with units of the team in establishing movement patterns and passing combinations as the ball is progressed into the attacking zone.

SET UP

80x60 yards with 2x10 yard zones at either end. 8v8 in the center area. The coach is positioned centrally and has a large supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach establishes the rhythm and tempo of the activity by starting each sequence with a pass to either team. The attacking objective for both teams is to maintain possession and make a penetrating pass into the opponents end zone. If a player is under pressure, a teammate can move into the defensive zone to receive a pass. An attacking player cannot go into the end zone unless they are running onto a pass made by a teammate. The unopposed defender in the defensive zone must pass the ball to a teammate in the same zone - transferring the point of attack from one side of the field to the other. The attacking team gains a point if they successfully make a penetrating pass into the opponents end zone and a teammate can control the ball inside the area. The activity can continue with the attacking team changing direction and attacking the other end, or with the coach playing a pass in from the sideline.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Encourage early penetrating passes when playing quick against an disorganized defense, or maintain controlled possession against an organized defense. Discuss the difference between passing to the front foot (attacking orientation) and back foot of a receiver (possession orientation).
- + Coaching tips - If the coach is responsible for restarting the activity, he/she can dictate the pace and allow teams to reorganize or not.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: An opponent free channel can be added to the sideline to provide more time and space for the attacking team.
- + More challenging: Reduce the size of the area. Introduce an attacking time limit to speed up play or a minimal number of passes to slow down attacks and focus on possession.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Build-up play, possession, passing and receiving.

Top 3 competencies: Passing over medium distances, transition, attacking and defending.



- + 80x60 yard area with an end zone at each end.
- + 8v8 in the area with the objective to pass the ball to an attacking teammate entering the end zone.
- + The coach controls the tempo.



- + The team in possession can play back into the defensive zone to relieve pressure.
- + The attacking players cannot enter the defensive zone when the opposition has possession.
- + A player in the end zone must play to another teammate in the end zone and switch the point of attack.



- + An attacking point is scored by the red team.
- + A diagonal pass is perfectly played to arrive as the teammate is entering into the end zone.
- + The attacker must stop the ball in the end zone for a point. The coach then restarts the activity.

ATTACKING BUILD-UP AND OVERLOAD 7V6

WHY USE IT

This is a great activity to work with midfield and attacking players to build-up play in the attacking third of the field (a functional activity). Using the field markings helps players to orientate themselves and provides perspective when and where in the game the sequences are appropriate.

SET UP

40x20 yards, measured from one end of the field utilizing the penalty box. Two appropriately sized goals at either end and the playing area is sectioned into 3 equally sized zones. One team has 7 players (reds) and the other (blues) has 6 players. In zone 1 - a goalkeeper playing with 2 red players vs 1 blue, zone 2 - 2v2 and zone 3 - 2v2.

HOW TO PLAY

The goalkeeper for the red team starts the activity and has a large supply of balls next to the goal. The objective is for the red team to build up play through the 3 zones, creating an overload in each. In zone 1, the 2 red players play against 1 blue and attempt to pass to a red player in the center zone. The red players in zone 2 must move to create space to receive a pass. Once a pass is made to zone 2, a red player from zone 1 can move into zone 2 to create an attacking overload (3v2). For simplicity, instruct the support player not passing the ball to move from zone 1 to 2 to begin. The 3 red players then attempt to play into the 2 red players in zone 3. If successful, the 2 support players from zone 2 can move into zone 3 to create a 4v2 overload. If blues win possession, they must counter attack. As blues transition to attack, the red players must quickly recover to the zone from which they started. Always start from the goalkeeper.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Players move forward to create overloads in attacking areas.
- + Coaching tips - Functional training recreates situations occurring in the game and focusses on particular roles and responsibilities. The activity location - close to the penalty box and central - naturally provides an opportunity to train central midfield, strikers and central defenders.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Reduce defensive players.
- + More challenging: Remove movement restrictions of defenders.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, counter attacking and defending in transition.

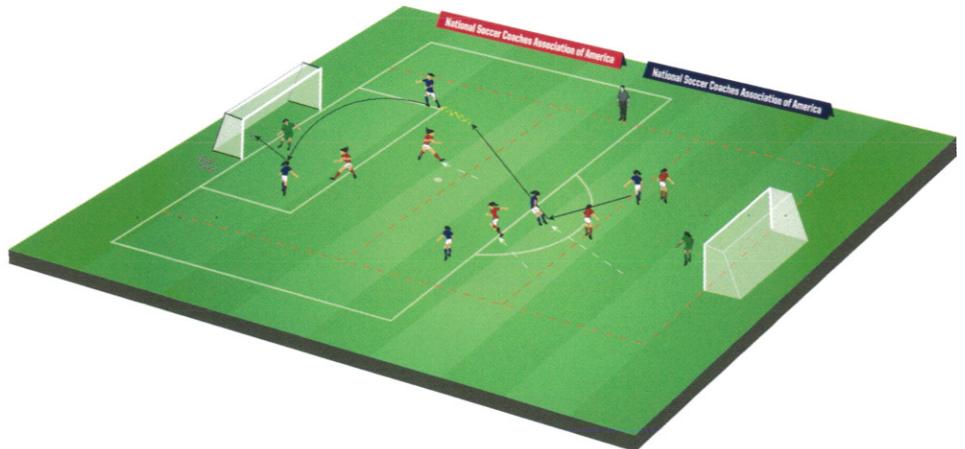
Top 3 competencies: Passing over medium and long distances, creating team space & finishing.



- + Goalkeeper for reds starts with the ball.
- + Red defenders split and open their bodies to create space.
- + The goalkeeper distributes into the path of the red defensive midfielder to encourage forward play.



- + The attacking midfielder creates space to receive the pass.
- + The other support player from zone 1 enters zone 2 on the 'weak side' and receives a pass.
- + Play continues forward and the strikers combine to create a shooting opportunity.



- + In this sequence, a blue defender has intercepted a pass in zone 3 and quickly plays forward into zone 2.
- + The red players supporting the overload are now out of position and must sprint to recover.
- + The blue's counter attack is incisive, ending with a cross and headed goal.

ATTACKING FULL BACK SUPPORT

WHY USE IT

A critical aspect of the modern game is to use the defensive full backs in attacking situations. Often, the full back will initiate the attack from within his or her own half and then continue to penetrate wide with or without the ball.

SET UP

The activity occurs on half a field with balls lined up along the halfway line. Cones are used to mark wide channels on both sides of the field and the center line to segment the left and right sides of the field. Another line of cones runs across the width of the field approximately 10 yards from the top of the penalty box. An appropriate size goal and the goalkeeper are positioned on the end-line.

HOW TO PLAY

The focus is on the attacking team starting with 4 players taking up traditional defensive positions just inside the attacking half of the field. To begin, only the players on the left or right side of the field are involved and the coach decides which side of the field to attack first. The central defender on the corresponding side passes the ball to one of 2 midfield players playing against 1 defender. The full back on that side of the field makes an overlapping run and the midfield player attempts to combine passes into the wide channel. The full back dribbles at pace along the channel and delivers a cross into the penalty area. The 2 attacking players marked by 4 defending players attempt to score. Alternate attacks from both sides and progress to allowing the other side of the field to participate in the attack.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – To develop attacks in wide positions, keeping the central midfield players narrow to provide space wide for the fullbacks to exploit.
- + Coaching tips – Start with the wide channels marked with cones to denote a ‘challenge free zone’ for the full backs. This condition helps the full backs to develop confidence and for the team to gain some attacking success. However, with older players the coach should look to remove the ‘no-go’ restrictions to replicate game conditions.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start with pattern play and passive defending to establish a rhythm, reduce the number of defending players and maintain defending ‘no-go’ zone.
- + More challenging: Remove the ‘no-go’ zone allowing defenders wide to meet the attackers.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

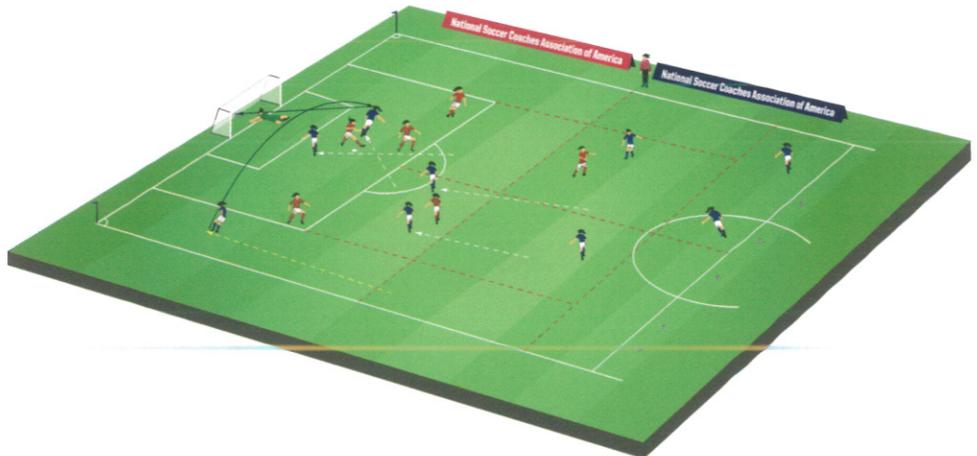
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, attacking with width and defending in units.

Top 3 competencies: Passing over medium and long distances, crossing and finishing.



- + The coach instructs the attacking team to initiate an attack down the left side of the field.
- + The central defender passes into one of the 2 central midfield players playing against 1 defender.
- + The midfield player moves the ball wide for the left back who is supporting from a deep position.



- + The full back dribbles down the ‘no-go’ zone and crosses deep into the penalty box.
- + The central midfield players from both teams can move into the attacking zone.
- + In the attacking zone 2 attackers play against 4 defenders.



- + In the final sequence the right attacking full back has initiated the attack with a direct pass to a forward.
- + The full back continues a run down the wide channel and receives a return pass.
- + Movement in the box by the forwards and midfield players is excellent and a goal is scored.

5V5 TO 7V7 POSSESSION BREAKOUT

WHY USE IT

This activity tests the player's ability to retain possession of the ball and to make short and medium length passes.

SET UP

2 boxes are set up adjacent to each other - a 25x25 yards square and a 12x12 yards square with 2-3 yards between them. An appropriate size goal is in the corner at both ends of the field.

HOW TO PLAY

The activity commences with a pass by the coach into the small square. 3 attackers attempt to maintain possession against 2 defenders. In this example the coach has stipulated 3 passes are required before the attacking team can breakout and combine with the players in the largest square. In the largest square 2 attackers guarded by 3 defenders wait to receive a pass. If the attacking team is able to combine with the 2 attackers, the 3 attackers and one defender from the smallest square can breakout and support in the largest square. The attacking team attempts to score in the goal opposite. If the defending team wins possession and score in the goal opposite. If the defending team wins possession of the ball in the smallest square, the coach can decide whether to restart the activity or allow the red defenders to score in their goal.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - In the smallest square, where space is tight and possession is more difficult to secure, the players must spread to the edges and pass quickly to benefit from the numerical advantage. An open body position is essential and players in the other area must create width and depth.
- + Coaching tips - Typically, young players waiting in the adjacent square will stand up to the edge closest to the action. Consequently, the available space for an attack is reduced. The coach can place a couple of cones and insist attackers and defenders must stay in the back half of the area until a pass is made.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Allow the attacking team in the first square to make a pass into the second square without having to achieve a set number of passes. Also reduce the defenders in each area to create 3v1 and 2v2.
- + More challenging: Introduce combinations such as a wall pass, overlap, double pass and/or limit the touches. Add goalkeepers and extra players to each area.

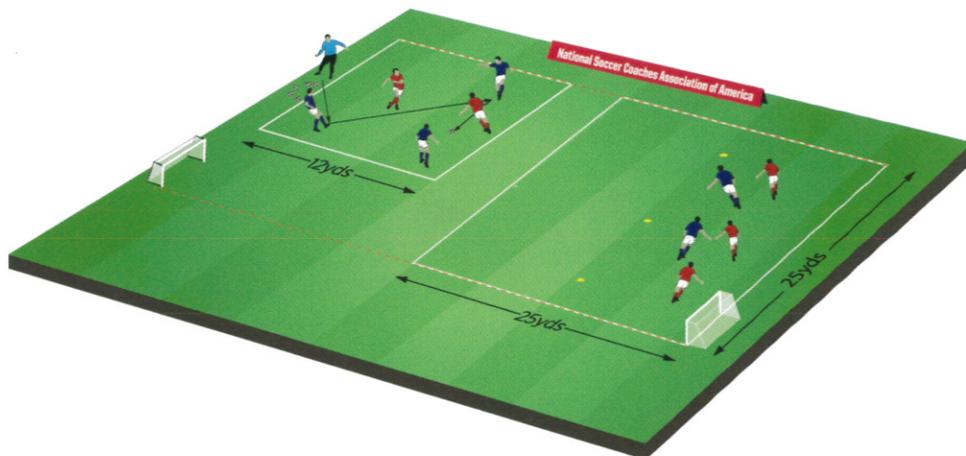
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

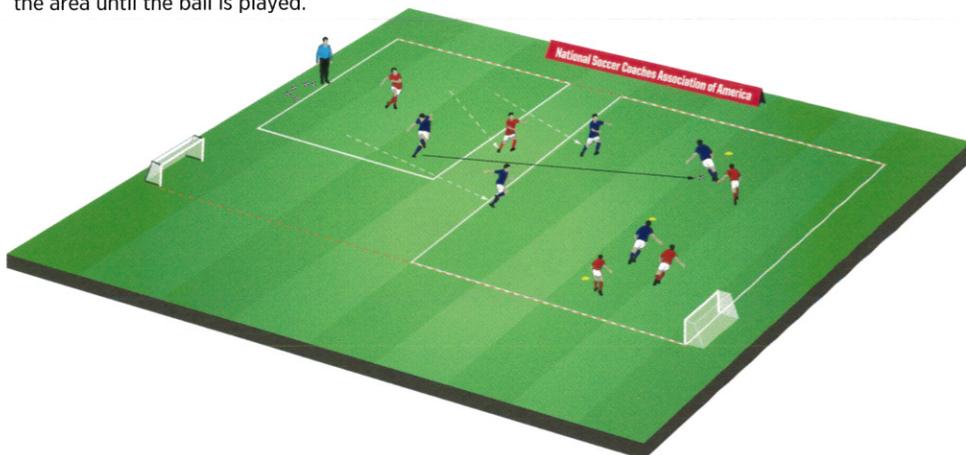
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Attacking in units, small group possession and small group defending.

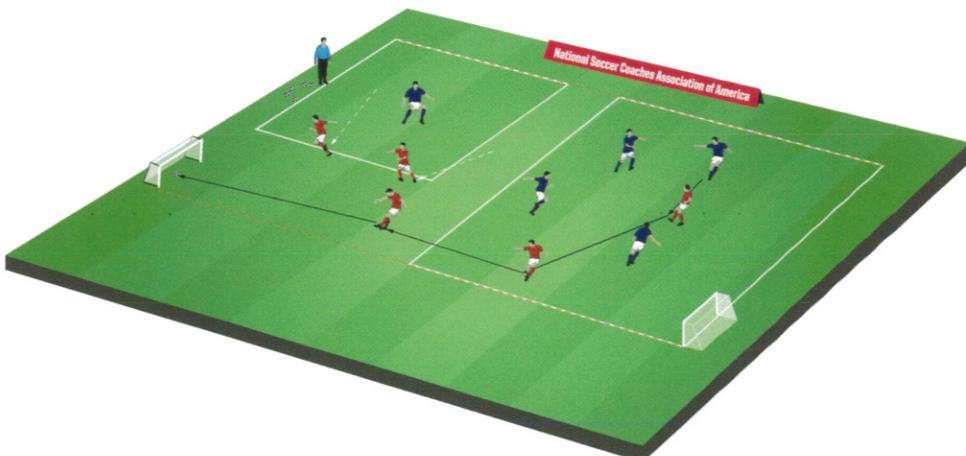
Top 3 competencies: Short and medium passing, creating team space and attacking movement.



- + The coach initiates the activity with a pass to one of the three blue attacking players in the smallest square.
- + The blue players must play quickly and combine three consecutive passes. In the largest square cones have been placed to split the area. The attacking and defending players must stand in the back half of the area until the ball is played.



- + The blues manage to make 3 consecutive passes and play a medium length pass to the other attackers.
- + 3 blue attackers and 1 red defender can breakout of the small square and support their teammates.
- + The blue team successfully maintain possession and must attempt to score a goal.



- + The defending team wins possession and quickly transfers the ball forward.
- + All the red team can support the attack and move freely in the area.
- + The blue team is slow to recover and the reds penetrate quickly wide and score a goal.

SMALL GROUP POSSESSION PATTERNS

WHY USE IT

Players in 2 teams move from end to end combining with team mates and maintaining possession. Patterns of play methodology is used to establish rhythm and understanding.

SET UP

70x30 yards. An end zone is created at both ends with 2 target players moving from side to side. In between the end zones are squares each 10x10 yards. 6 players from each team start in any square.

HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the activity is to move the ball from one end of the area to the other and combine with either of the target players. To add challenge and complexity, there are 2 teams playing the same game at the same time with their own ball. Additionally, no 2 players from the same team can be in the same square at the same time. 2 players from different teams can occupy the same square, but can only use 1 touch in that eventuality. The coach can add many conditions to make the activity more challenging - see below.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Looking ahead/predicting play is critical to the success and speed of ball movement. The coach can introduce different passing sequences and requirements, such as short-long-short sequence and chip, lofted, bent and driven passes.
- + Coaching tips - Keep players moving constantly by introducing a 'thinking foul' - 3 push-ups for anyone found standing.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Allow the players to move the ball from one end to the other without restrictions.
- + More challenging: There are numerous conditions: 1) The ball must be transferred to adjacent squares (short passing); 2) The ball cannot be passed to an adjacent square (requiring longer passing and movement deep); 3) Add a 1 or 2 touch restriction in every square to speed up play and challenge the players techniques; 4) Add a competition between the 2 teams to complete 5-10 complete transfers from one end to the other before; 5) Start all sequences from one end - requiring the team to set-up quickly; 6) All players must be in the attacking half before passing to the target player.

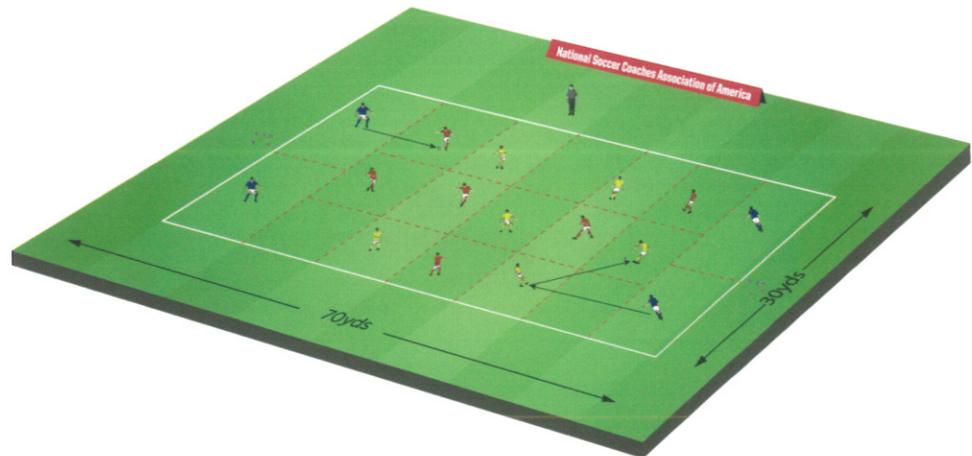
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

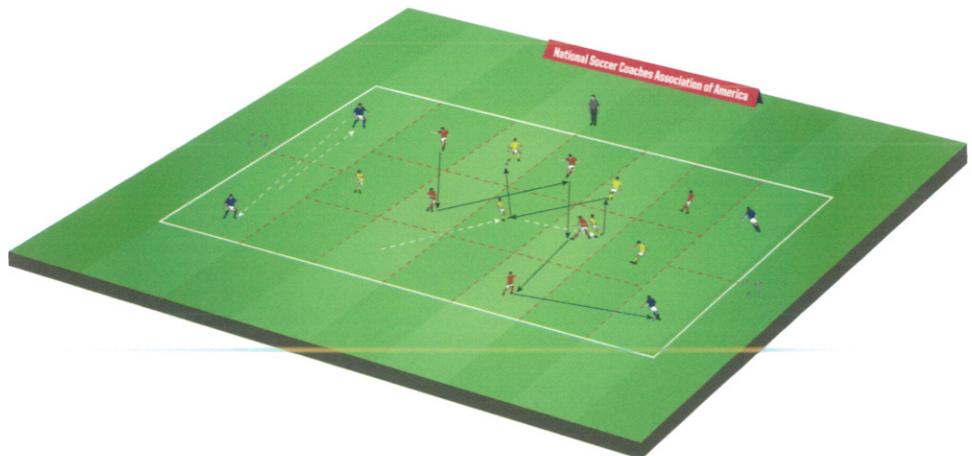
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Build-up play, possession, passing and receiving.

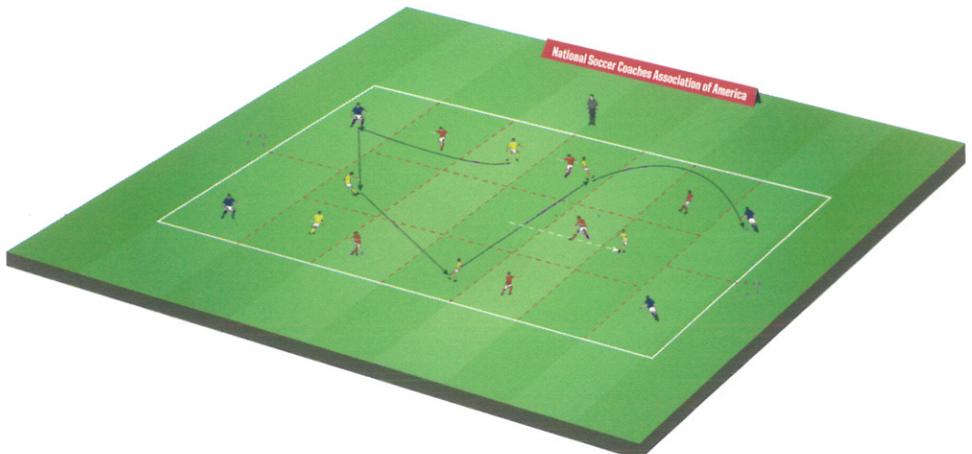
Top 3 competencies: Passing, movement to create space and communication.



- + 2 teams play concurrently, attempting to transfer a ball from one end to the other.
- + 2 target players in each end zone and 6 players from each team share 15 squares.
- + Start with 1 player in each square.



- + The teams start with a pass from a target at opposite ends.
- + The coach determines the rules of the game - similar or different for both teams. For example, one team must play through adjacent squares and the other may have to avoid adjacent squares.



- + The yellow team pass through adjacent squares in one direction to gain a point.
- + In the opposite direction the yellow team plays a more direct and chips a pass into the target.
- + The first team to achieve 10 points wins.

3 ZONE POSSESSION - 3V1 TO 4V2

WHY USE IT

This activity is focused on retaining and developing possession in small groups and through lines of the team. Players must continually re-evaluate their position on the field and move to create individual and team space.

SET UP

The set-up is a 60x20 yards area with 3 equal zones measuring 20x20 yards. In each zone play 3v1 in favor of the attacking team and place a small counter attacking goal adjacent to the side of each zone. The coach stands on the sideline with a large supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

Play commences with the coach's pass to the attacking team at either end of the field. The first pass is free so the defender cannot intercept the coach's pass. As the ball is being played the coach shouts out a number, such as "3". This indicates to the attacking players they must make 3 consecutive passes without interception before playing a pass to an attacker in the next zone. If the defender wins possession he/she can attempt to score in the goal adjacent to the zone. As long as the ball is in a zone play is 'live' and the attackers can win the ball back from a defender. As the ball enters the 2nd zone the coach can continue with the same conditions or change the objectives on the fly. As the game progresses add an additional attacker and defender to each zone to create 4v2.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with the attackers to maximize the available space in each zone by spreading to the corners. With 3 attackers players should create triangles to play around the defender.
- + Coaching tips - With older players add new energy to a familiar activity by changing the rules or objectives as the ball is in play. These changes add complexity, challenging a player's cognitive ability and testing their technique.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Start with unopposed or semi-opposed pattern play.
- + More challenging: There are several ways to change the conditions: 1) shout a different number with each possession; 2) add a 1 or 2 touch restriction to speed up play and challenge the players techniques; 3) add a second ball and attack from the other end simultaneously; 4) allow an attacker to move between zones and 5) allow defenders to move freely between zones.

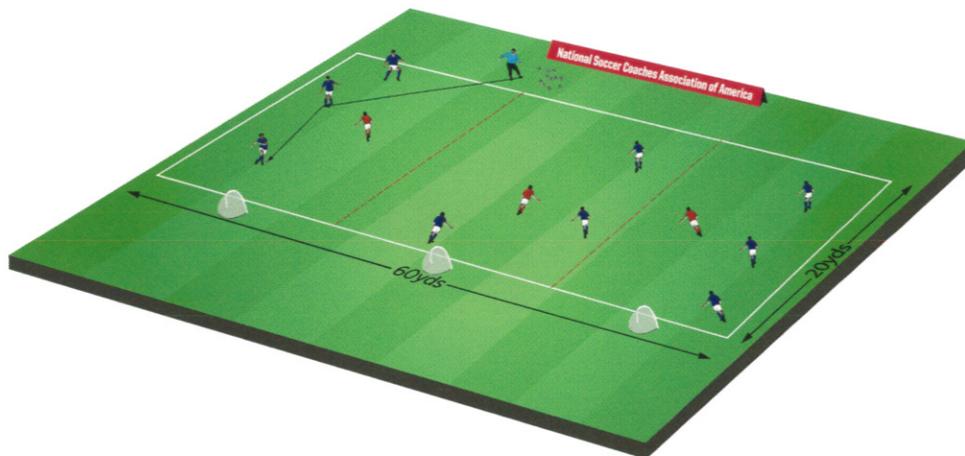
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

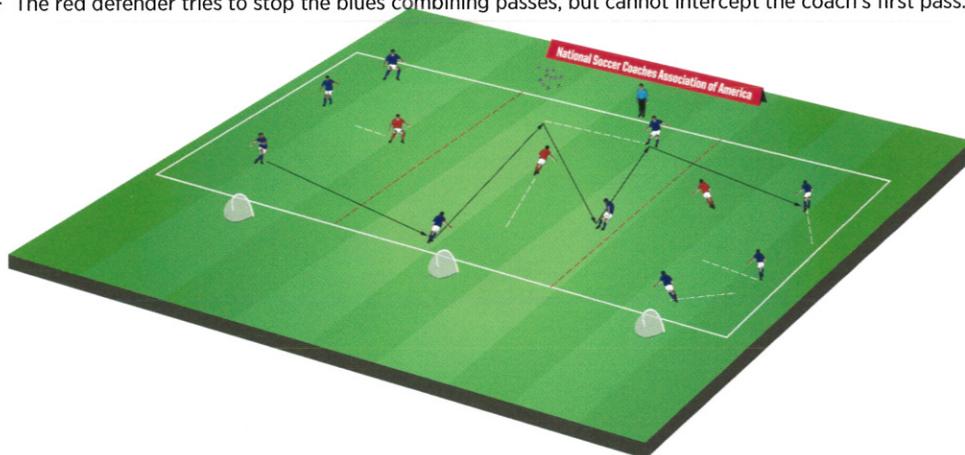
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Build-up play, possession, passing and receiving.

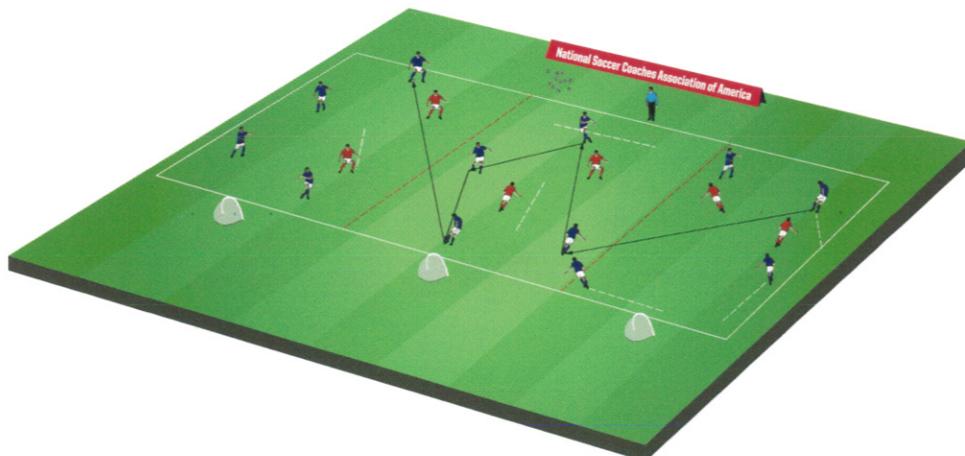
Top 3 competencies: Passing, movement to create space and communication.



- + In each zone there are 3 blue attackers against 1 red defender.
- + The coach plays a pass to one of the blue attackers and shouts "1" to indicate the attackers must make at least 1 pass between them before playing to the attackers in middle zone.
- + The red defender tries to stop the blues combining passes, but cannot intercept the coach's first pass.



- + The blue team successfully progress through the middle zone for 1 point and end zone for 2 points.
- + In the middle zone the coach shouts "3 PASSES" to require 3 consecutive passes before proceeding to the end zone. As the ball enters the end zone, the coach shouts "1 TOUCH" to speed up play.



- + In this sequence the coach has added a defender and attacker to each zone creating a 4v2.
- + The blue team moves the ball well from one end to the other and scores a point each time they progress to the next zone.

DOUBLE GOAL CHALLENGE - 4V4+2 TO 7V7+2

WHY USE IT

Two teams compete to keep possession and score goals in two goals centrally located in the area. The coach imposes conditions to draw-out the main themes of the session - possession and shooting.

SET UP

The set-up is a 50x40 yards area with two appropriate size goals positioned back-to-back in the center of the area. Each team starts with 5 players roaming around the area and there is one goalkeeper protecting both goals. Two all-time offensive players are added to provide the attacking team with an advantage.

HOW TO PLAY

This activity can be used to achieve many different attacking and defending objectives. In this example the focus is on attacking combinations, team possession and finishing. The coach starts each possession with a pass to either team and with support of the 2 neutral players the attackers look to score. The coach can add different conditions to change the focus, such as the attacking team must make 5 passes before scoring. Also, in transition the attacking team must score in the other goal, or all players from the attacking team must be on the same half of the field when a goal is scored. The goalkeeper must run from one goal to the other to protect both goals.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Work with the attacking team to move the ball quickly and switch the point of attack. Utilizing the neutral players to outnumber the defenders is most effective if the attacking team is able to 'stretch' the defensive shape, and draw the defenders away from the area immediately in front of goal.

- + Coaching tips - With the goals in the center of the area the players will naturally gravitate to the middle and condense the attacking space. Encourage the players to start close to the edge of the area so they can see the whole field and find it easier to retain possession of the ball.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Place a dividing line to separate 2 halves of the field, play 3v2 in each half and allow the neutral players to move freely. The coach can also reduce the number of players and start without goalkeepers.

- + More challenging: The coach can build up attacking and defending numbers quickly, can introduce 2 balls, remove the all-time offensive players and play with 2 goalkeepers.

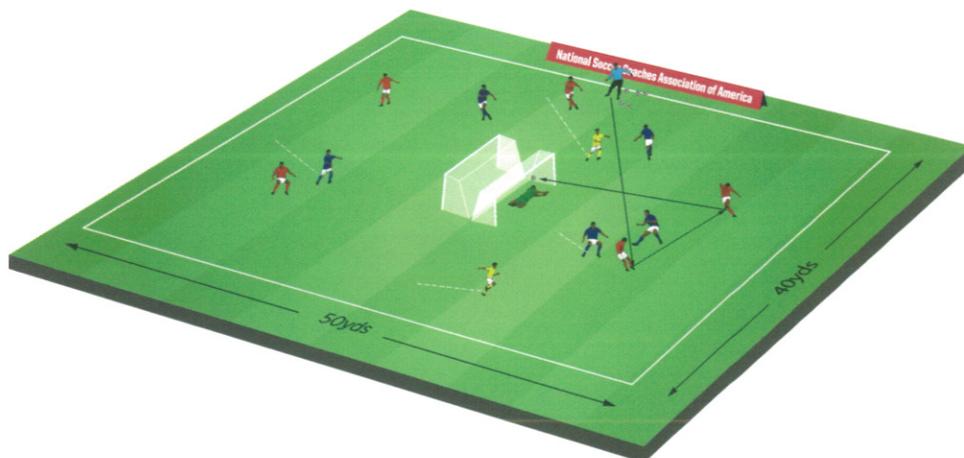
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

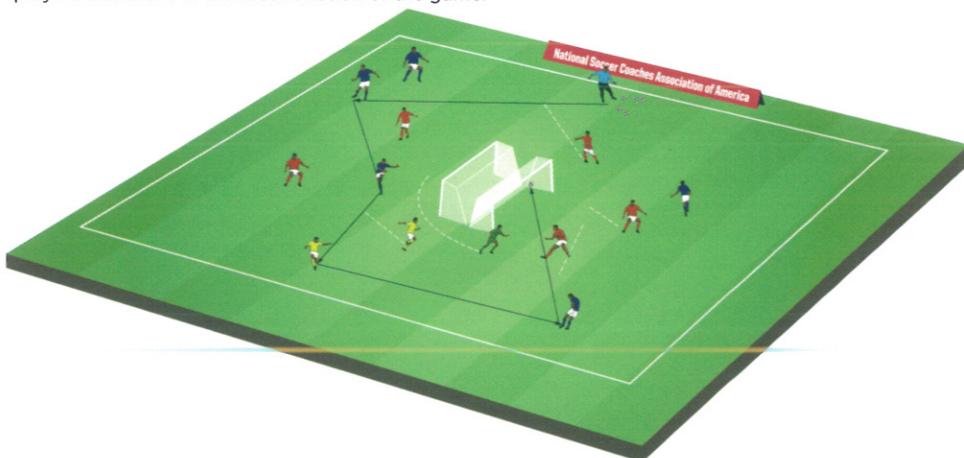
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing combinations, passing, receiving and defending in transition.

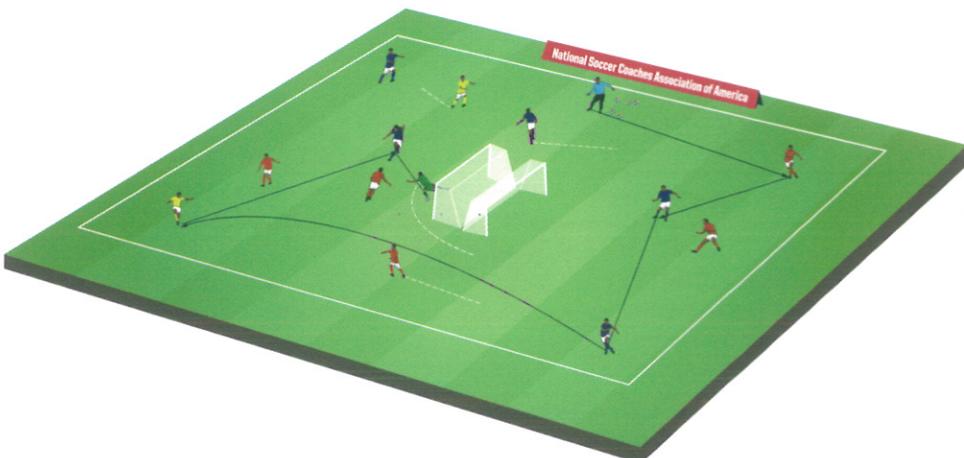
Top 3 competencies: Passing short/medium distances, creating space and shooting.



- + The coach starts the activity with a pass to the red team and the blues transition quickly to defense.
- + To begin the only objective for both teams is to score as many goals as possible in 10 minutes.
- + The yellows are all-time offensive players and must work hard to support the attacking team. The yellow players can score in the first variation of the game.



- + In the second diagram the coach has passed to the blue team and reds must defend.
- + The coach adds a condition that a goal scored on the other side of the field is worth 2 points.
- + The blue team elect to switch play with help from yellows and catch the goalkeeper and reds in transition.



- + In the final sequence the blue team intercepts an errant pass and quickly moves the ball around the goals.
- + The blue and yellow players create width and depth to stretch the red defenders.
- + A beautiful long pass is driven to the feet of the neutral player, who finds an attacker open in the box.

4 SQUARE KEEP BALL 3V3V3

WHY USE IT

An exceptional activity brings together several game objectives in one situation, including attacking, defending, transition and passing. This variation focuses on passing combinations and transition.

SET UP

20x20 yards, with a 1 yard channel separating 4 boxes in the shape of a cross. 3 attackers start in one box with a ball, 3 other attackers each stand in the vacant boxes and 3 defenders occupying the 'cross'. The coach stands on the sideline with a supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

3 attackers start in possession of the ball in a small 9x9 yard square. One defender joins in and attempts to win possession. The attackers attempt to make 5 consecutive passes before playing the ball to another attacker in one of the 3 other squares. To begin, the 2 other defending players occupying the cross are not allowed to intercept the pass. On receipt of the pass, the other 2 attackers standing in the other squares immediately sprint to support their teammate. Once again the objective is to achieve 5 consecutive passes against a new defender to earn a point. The original attacking team, on transition of the ball to the new attacking team, must quickly occupy the vacant squares. If the defenders win possession they attempt to pass to one of the other defenders for 1 point. If the ball goes out or the defenders win possession, the coach passes a new ball to any of the 4 squares to restart the game.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – By making the defenders in the 'cross' active, the added dimension is for the attackers to recognize when to play over/beyond the opponent and when to play between through the seams.
- + Coaching tips – The coach should challenge the players to resolve challenges by using open questions. For example, what are the advantages and disadvantages of players standing deep in each area.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

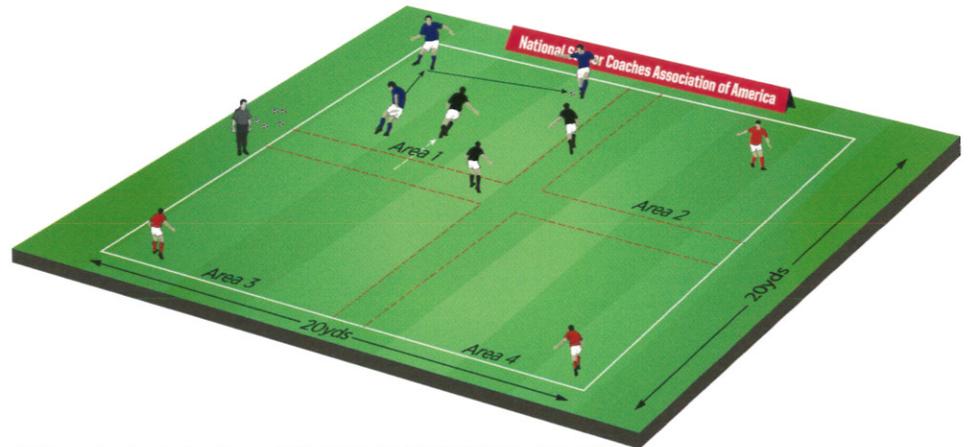
- + Less challenging: Start with the defenders not directly involved in the play stepping to the outside of the area.
- + More challenging: Reduce the size of the area to condense play around the attackers. Coach can call out the name of the player the attackers must play to next.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

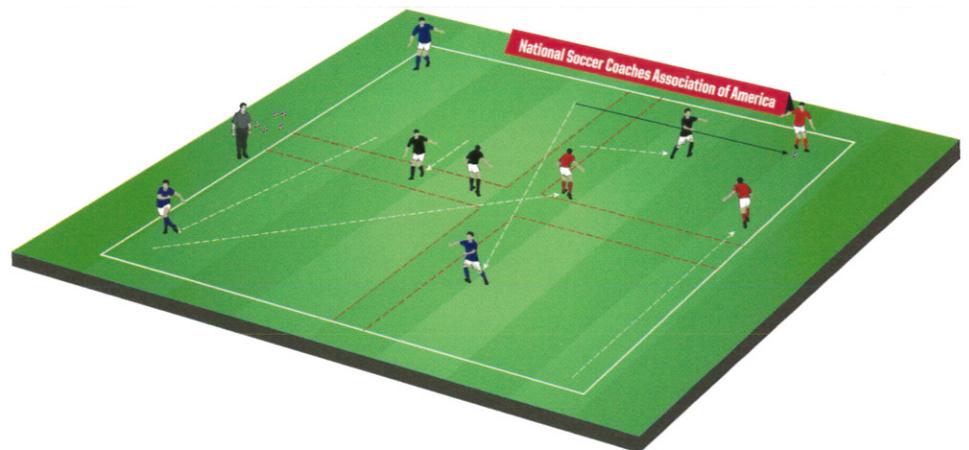
Stages 3, 4 & 5 - 9-18 year old players

THEMES & COMPETENCIES

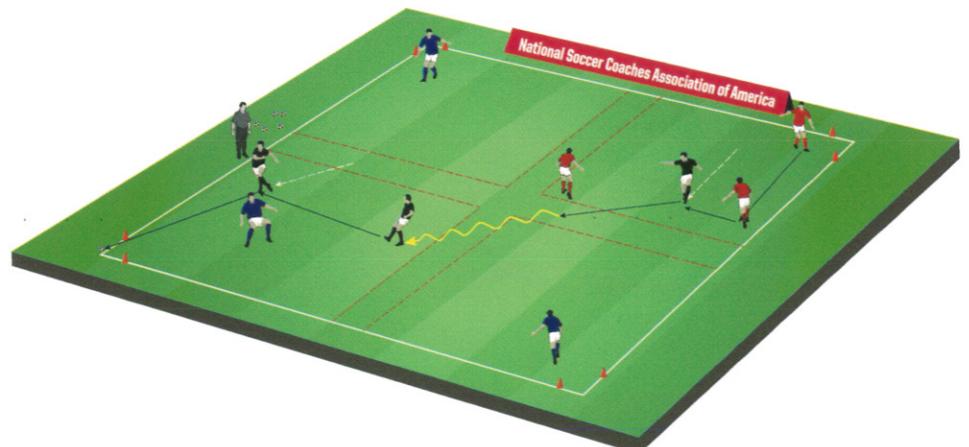
Top 3 themes: Passing combinations, passing and receiving and defending in transition.
Top 3 competencies: Passing short/medium distances, creating space and pressure defending.



- + 3 blue attackers play 'keep ball' against 1 black defender in area 1.
- + 3 red attackers are in support in areas 2-4.
- + 2 additional black defenders occupy a zone separating the squares - the defenders are not active to begin.



- + The blues successfully combine for 5 passes and pass to the red attacker in the adjacent area.
- + The blue team move quickly to occupy the 3 remaining areas.
- + The red attackers must sprint to support their teammate and attempt to make 5 consecutive passes.



- + Cones are used to create small goals (1-2 yards) in each corner.
- + The black defender intercepts a pass and immediately transitions the ball to a teammate.
- + The black defenders attack any of the 3 boxes with 1 blue defender, attempting to score in the corner goal.

CHIP IT 5V3

WHY USE IT

Chip It 5v3 is a technically demanding activity the players will love to play. It is a great way for the coach to introduce players to medium and long passing skills such as chipping, bending and driving a ball.

SET UP

The area is a 30x30 yards square with 4 appropriate size goals placed centrally along each sideline. In the center of the area are 2 teams of 3 players, with 2 neutral players always playing for the attacking team in possession of the ball. The coach stands on the sideline with a large supply of balls. The size of the area must be appropriate for the ability and strength of the players. Ideally an average player should be able to comfortably chip, loft or drive the ball onto the crossbar from any spot in the square.

HOW TO PLAY

The coach passes to either team and the objective is to combine for a set number of passes with teammates or neutral players. Once the team has achieved the possession target a player can attempt to chip, loft, bend or drive the ball at any of the 4 goals. The team is awarded points for hitting the crossbar (3 points) or post (2 points). As we are encouraging players to elevate the ball, they can also earn 1 point for playing a 'chip' over the crossbar or scoring a goal without bouncing. A shot wide or a goal scored along the ground loses 1 point. If the ball hits the crossbar and then immediately crosses the line the game is over! Play for 10 minutes and the team with the highest score wins.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Work with players to create space and find a position where they are able to see the full face of the goal. The coach must also discuss and demonstrate with players the correct technique for chipping, bending and driving a ball.
- + Coaching tips – Technical development of older youth players is still critically important. The ability to pass accurately over 20-30 yards using different techniques must be practiced in an environment offering an appropriate degree of challenge. Instead of standing 20 yards apart and hitting balls back and forth players will gain much more by playing against defenders.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Close the space and play 5v1.
- + More challenging: Add a center square, add 2 balls and play 5v5.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

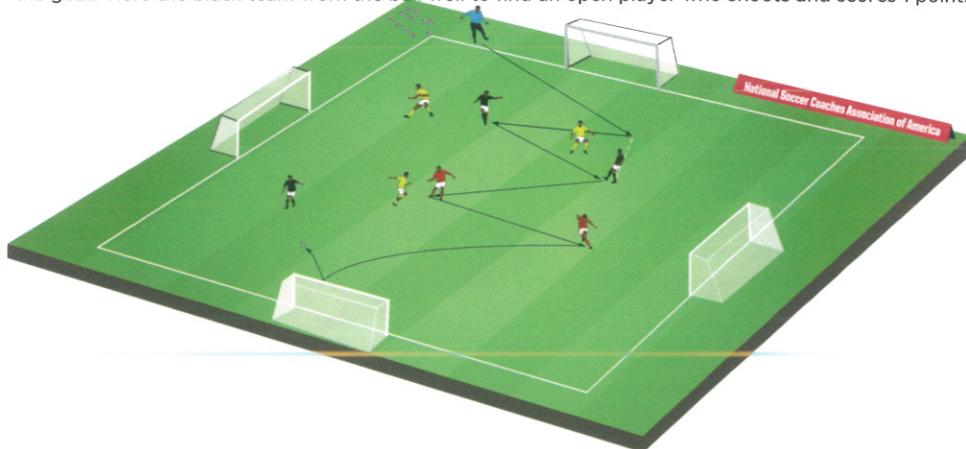
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing technique, creating space and defending in transition.

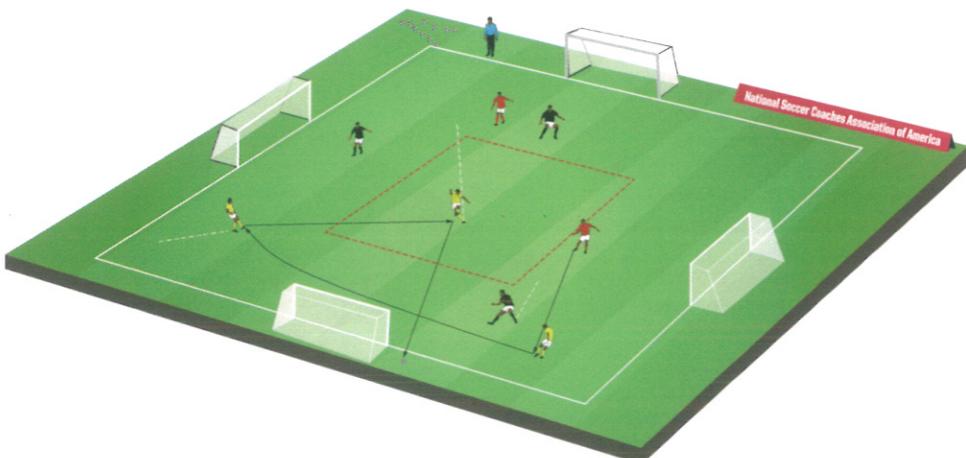
Top 3 competencies: Passing short/medium distances, creating space and pressure defending.



- + The coach passes the ball to the black team who must combine with reds to make 3 passes or more.
- + The 3 yellow defenders must attempt to win possession and play with the red neutral players.
- + The attacking team must work hard to find space to chip, bend or drive the ball against the frame of the goal. Here the black team work the ball well to find an open player who shoots and scores 1 point.



- + The coach restarts the game with a pass to the team scoring the previous point.
- + Some nice combination play by black and red finds a neutral player with time and space.
- + A beautiful chipped pass hits the crossbar and the team is awarded 3 points.



- + In the final sequence the coach adds an additional challenge by introducing a 15 yard center square.
- + Only the attacking team can enter the square and must take a first time shot.
- + The yellow attacker receives a firm pass along the ground but the shot goes wide and yellows lose 1 point.

LONG BALL COMPETITION

WHY USE IT

'Long Ball Competition' is a technical training activity for older players capable of playing accurate long passes over yards or more and receive with different surfaces of the body.

SET UP

Two 8v8 yards squares are positioned 30 yards apart and 3 players from each team occupy the area. A few extra balls are placed next to each area.

HOW TO PLAY

Each team starts with 5 points and each successful long pass gains 1 point and each mistake loses 1 point. The first team to score 10 points wins, or the first team to lose all 5 points loses. For younger players or players struggling to make long accurate passes the coach can close the distance to 15 yards. To begin the game the players are allowed unlimited touches to control and pass the ball. Each team must pass the ball from their square to the other team's square and all 3 players must touch the ball at least once before a pass is made. The ball must always be in motion. If the ball stops, a pass is inaccurate or the ball leaves the square when players are combining, the team loses a point. If a long pass reaches the opponents area the passing team earns a point. As players become more proficient the coach can allow the receiving team to earn an extra point - if they can make 4 consecutive 1 touch passes before a defender from the other square is able to intercept a pass.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - To provide players with many long passing repetitions and work on receiving technique. Players will need to be able to cushion the ball with their head, chest, thighs and feet when receiving a ball out of the air.
- + Coaching tips - The coach must develop confidence and rhythm before moving the players back to longer passing distances. It is important to achieve some success before increasing the challenge. The session will quickly lose momentum if the difficulty is too great and players believe the activity is impossible.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Reduce space between the squares and allow multiple touches for each player.
- + More challenging: Increase the distance between areas and insist on players playing 1 touch. The ball must travel the distance in the air and send a defender to apply pressure.

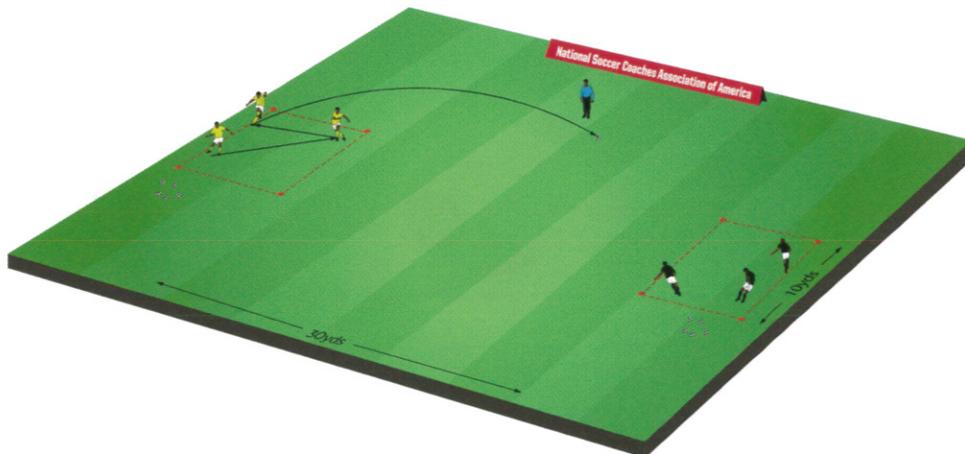
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

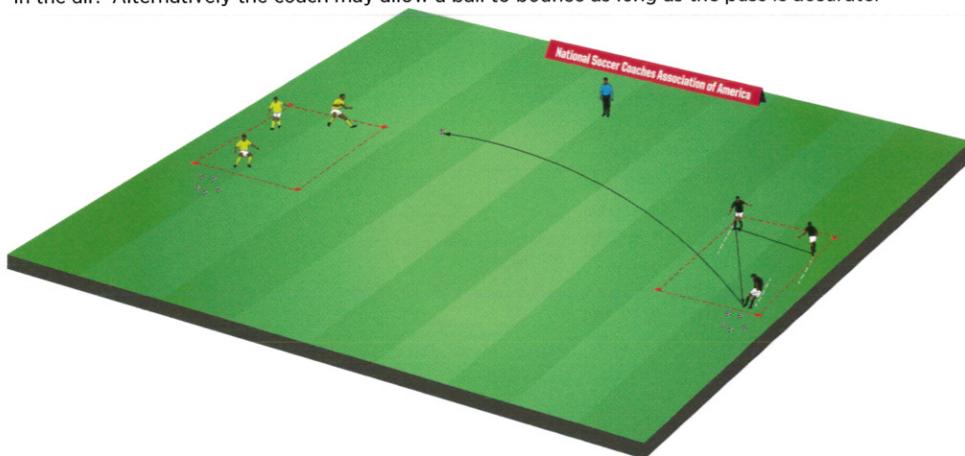
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

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

Top 3 competencies: Passing medium/long distances, receiving high balls and movement.



- + The coach has set up 2 squares 30 yards apart for a very competent group of players.
- + The yellow team makes 2 passes with a 1-touch rhythm and the third pass is long towards the blacks area.
- + The pass from the yellow player is driven with enough height to travel the distance between the squares in the air. Alternatively the coach may allow a ball to bounce as long as the pass is accurate.



- + The black team receives the yellows pass and as the ball is travelling the players adjust their position.
- + The 3 black players spread to the edges of the area to create as much time and space as they can.
- + The black team manages 3 successful passes and drive the ball back to the yellows.



- + The quality of passing and movement is very high and as a result the coach adds a new condition.
- + After the yellow team passes towards the blacks area a yellow player sprints to defend 1v3.
- + The black team must now achieve 4 consecutive passes before they send the ball back to the yellow team.

CHANGING THE POINT OF ATTACK 5V5+4 TO 9V9

WHY USE IT

This activity helps to improve a team's attacking balance between playing to retain possession and a more direct style. The objective is to use the full width of the field and break out of tight defensive situations with pace.

SET UP

The set-up is a 50x40 yards area with a line splitting the field in two. To begin, play 5v5 in half of the field, supported along the sideline by 2 neutral players. At the other end of the area are 2 more neutral players waiting to receive a long ball.

HOW TO PLAY

All the players start in one half of the area with the exception of 2 neutral players. The team starting with possession must make 3 consecutive passes before playing a long pass to either of the target players in the other half. The attacking team are supported by the 2 neutral players acting as 'bumpers'. When a long ball switch is achieved, the 2 teams sprint into the other half and attempt to make 4 consecutive passes (add 1 additional pass each successful attempt). If the defending team win possession the teams reverse roles. The neutral players always play for the attacking team in possession. To progress the activity, add more players to create a 9v9. Alternatively, make the activity 'directional' by adding goals and keepers. When a switch is made the target player has 2 touches to control and cross the ball for the attacking team attempting to score. Now, the team must decide how many defenders to hold back in case the opponent wins possession.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives – Players need to be aware of their environment and should check constantly over their shoulders to know what space is available and where pressure is coming from.
- + Coaching tips – When a long switch is made the team must commit players forward quickly to take advantage of a recovering defense. However, the players must also communicate effectively to organize the defense in case of a quick turnover of possession.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Begin with 5v5 with neutral players to assist the attacking team and transition after just 3 passes.
- + More challenging: Increase the number of players on both teams and increase the number of consecutive passes required.

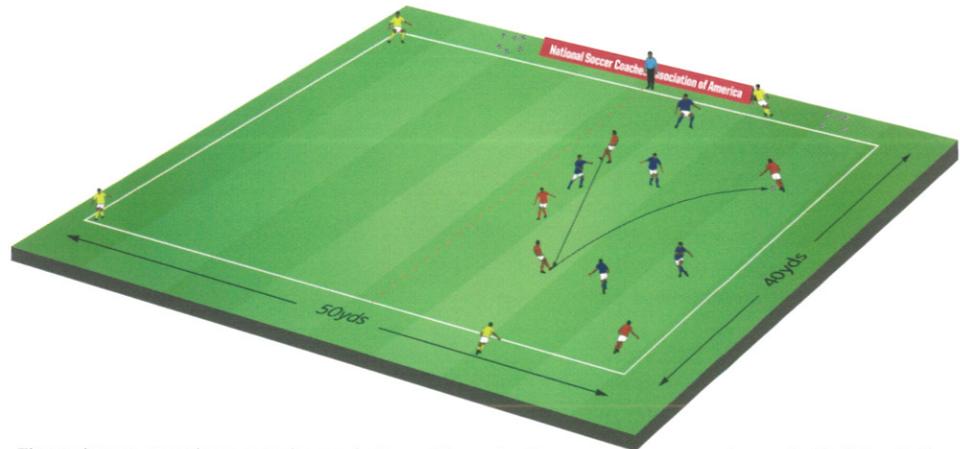
STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

Stages 4 & 5 - 12-18 year old players

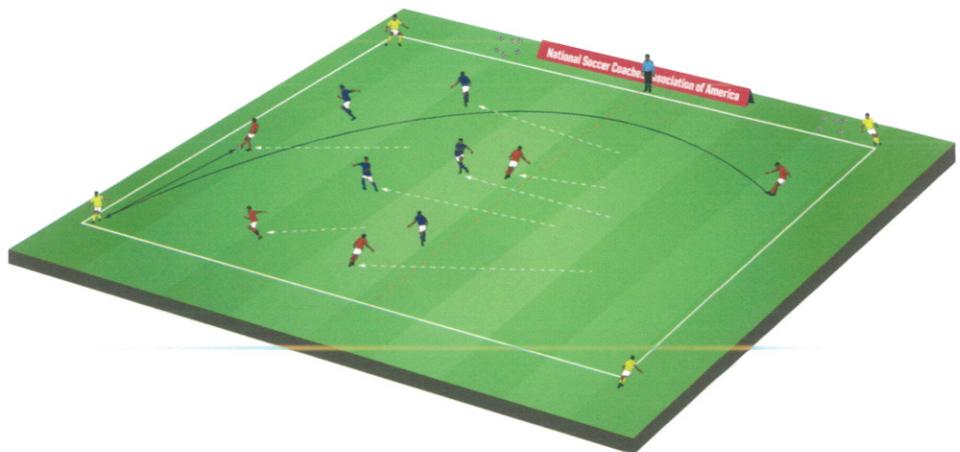
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing combinations, passing and receiving and attacking in transition.

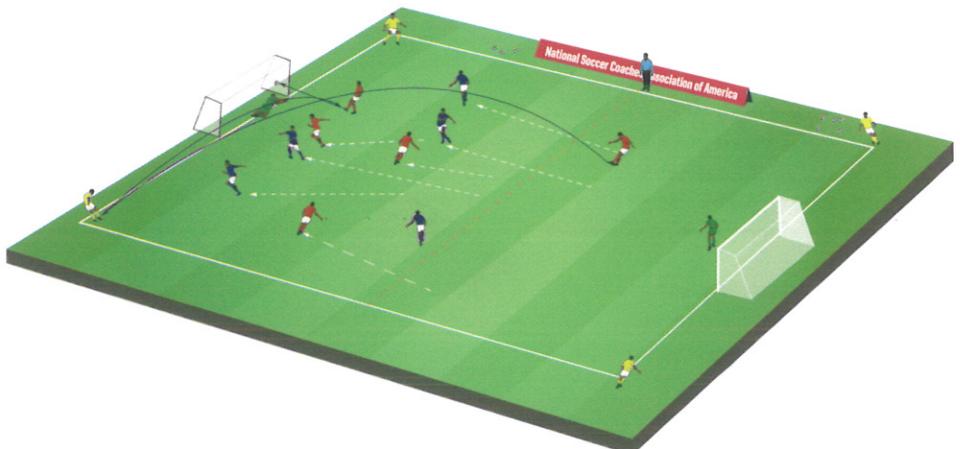
Top 3 competencies: Passing short/medium distances, creating space & supportive movement.



- + The red team start in possession and attempt to make 3 consecutive passes in one half of the field.
- + The blue team attempt to win possession and if successful switch roles with reds in the flow.
- + 2 yellow neutral players support the attacking team and 2 yellow target players are ready for the switch.



- + The red attacker drives a long pass into the feet of a yellow target player who has 2 touches.
- + The reds and blues transition from one half to the other quickly.
- + The reds retain possession and attempt to make 4 consecutive passes before making another switch.



- + To progress the activity the coach has introduced goals at both ends and goalkeepers.
- + The reds play a long ball again and this time the yellow target controls and crosses for a far post finish.
- + The reds must be mindful of their defensive responsibilities in case the blues were to win possession.

2 BALL PASSING COMPETITION

WHY USE IT

2 teams compete in this attacking and defending small sided game encouraging driven, bent and shipped passes over distance. Players can be added at any point to increase the degrees of difficulty and other conditions can be imposed to draw out the main themes.

SET UP

The set-up is a 50x50 yards square with a 2 yard end zone on all 4 sides. Each team starts with 4 players in the main area. One team attacks North-South and the other East-West with target players opposite each other in the end zones. Each target player has a supply of balls.

HOW TO PLAY

The objective of the game is to score points by passing the ball from one target player to the other in as few passes as possible. If a team is able to transfer the ball with 2 passes they win 3 points, 3 passes - 2 points and 4 or more passes - 1 point. The first team to score 10 points wins the game. The target players must receive and control the ball inside the end zone to earn the points and play can travel in both directions. Play 4v4 in the main area and teams must decide whether to commit players to defending the opponent or supporting the attack.

COACHING NOTES

- + Coaching objectives - Players should be encouraged to move into space and open their bodies to be able to make a long pass if the target player is open. Extra points could be awarded to encourage players to make a driven, bent or chipped pass.
- + Coaching tips - To encourage long passing the coach has purposefully made the area large enough to create significant distance between the target players. The size of the area also ensures there is plenty of time and space for a player in possession to 'lift their head' before making a decision to pass or dribble.

HOW TO MODIFY THE ACTIVITY

- + Less challenging: Play without defenders to begin - each team trying to reach 10 points first.
- + More challenging: Add more players to the central area to reduce the available space, impose a 2-touch restriction and play with one ball.

STAGES COVERED BY ACTIVITY

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

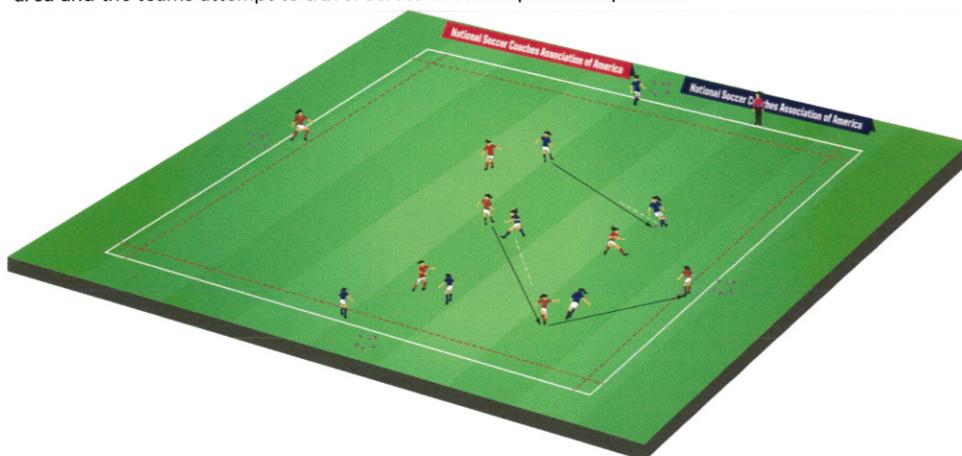
THEMES & COMPETENCIES

Top 3 themes: Passing combinations, long passing and defending.

Top 3 competencies: Medium and long passing, creating space and communication.



- + The red and blue teams are attempting to reach 10 points before their opponent by passing to the targets.
- + A ball for each team is in play simultaneously and the teams are playing in different directions.
- + The target players for each team start the sequence with a pass to any of their teammates in the central area and the teams attempt to travel across in as few passes as possible.



- + The red team gains 2 points for making 3 passes before playing to the red target player.
- + As 2 red players are involved in the passing sequence the other 2 are defending against the blue team.
- + The red defenders have successfully slowed the blues attack.



- + A red attacker has moved at a good supporting angle and the target player is able to make a pass.
- + With an open body position the red attacker is able to see an opportunity to make a long pass to the target.
- + Reds also defend well and a blue player elects to dribble.



**National Soccer Coaches
Association of America**

COACHING COURSE MENU

Take the next step! The NSCAA Coaching Course Menu is designed with flexibility for coaches to choose their desired level of entry based on previous experience. Levels 1-6 all offer unique material and can be taken in any order. We recommend reading each course description to determine the best fit for you; make sure to pay attention to any potential pre-requisites.

Beginner

Level 1 Diploma
Level 2 Diploma
Level 3 Diploma
Special Topics Webinars

Intermediate

Level 4 Diploma
Level 5 Diploma
Level 6 Diploma
Special Topics

Advanced

National Diploma
Adv. National Diploma
Premier Diploma
Master Coach

Goalkeeping

GK Level 1
GK Level 2
GK Level 3
Advanced National GK

High School

NFHS
Fundamentals
of Coaching
High School
Diploma

Director of Coaching

DOC
Diploma
Member Club
Club Standards
Advanced DOC Certificate

STAGE 5 - ADOLESCENCE: LATE PUBERTY/EARLY ADULTHOOD (15-18 YEARS OLD)

During middle adolescence, puberty is well underway, and is complete in many teenagers. There is a decreased preoccupation with the body and an increased involvement with peers. Parental conflicts develop over independence, since the peer group often serves as the adolescent's reference for their standards of behavior. By the age of 16, most girls have completed the changes associated with puberty and most boys are well on their way to finishing pubertal development, having gained muscle mass and strength. If players in stage five have received appropriate coaching in stages 1-4, they will be ready to perform competently in game situations.

DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

- Team tactics should form a significant part of practice sessions and teams should be coached in team 'units' – defense, midfield and attack.
- Position training is important, and players should be prepared for a primary position.
- Physical conditioning is also important for all players and training should be tailored to the physical demands of their position on the field.
- On average, boys reach PHV in Stage 5. Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.
- Optimum time for the introduction of strength training for boys (1-1 ½ years following PHV)
- The second speed training window opens for boys (13-16 years)
- Participation in other sports can enhance physical preparation and transferability to soccer. However, soccer should be the primary sport for serious and committed players.

KEY DEVELOPMENT POINTS FOR CHILDREN IN STAGE 5

Physically	Psychological/Social	Cognitive/Mental
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start of speed and strength training for male and female players. 2. Aerobic conditioning following peak height velocity. 3. Girls reach full maturity at the beginning of Stage 5 and boys peak around 16 years of age. 4. Shows improved posture and coordination in coping with physical changes. 5. Needs to continue fitness activities, especially those that develop flexibility, aerobic and anaerobic efficiency, muscular strength and endurance. 6. Can achieve advanced levels of complex skill and movement efficiency. 7. Decreases in flexibility. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased interest in the opposite sex. 2. Decreased conflict with parents. 3. Deeper capacity for caring and sharing, and the development of more intimate relationships. 4. Decrease time spent with parents and more time spent with peers. 5. Strong social needs and desires. 6. Wants and needs own voice in planning. 7. Desires leadership roles. 8. Team and group allegiance important. 9. Developing into an independent person who is increasingly able to make choices, solve problems and accept responsibility for own actions. 10. Developing more stable and emotional responses. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More defined work habits 2. More concern about future educational and vocational plans 3. Greater ability to sense right and wrong 4. Sadness or depression, which can lead to poor grades at school, alcohol or drug abuse, unsafe sex, thoughts of suicide, and other problems (Note: Problems at school, alcohol and drug abuse, and other disorders can also lead to feelings of sadness or hopelessness.) 5. Able to learn new skills in a short time. 6. Thinking becomes more practical and adaptive to take into account logical reasoning. 7. Changes are multi-directional and depend on education and understanding of the world.