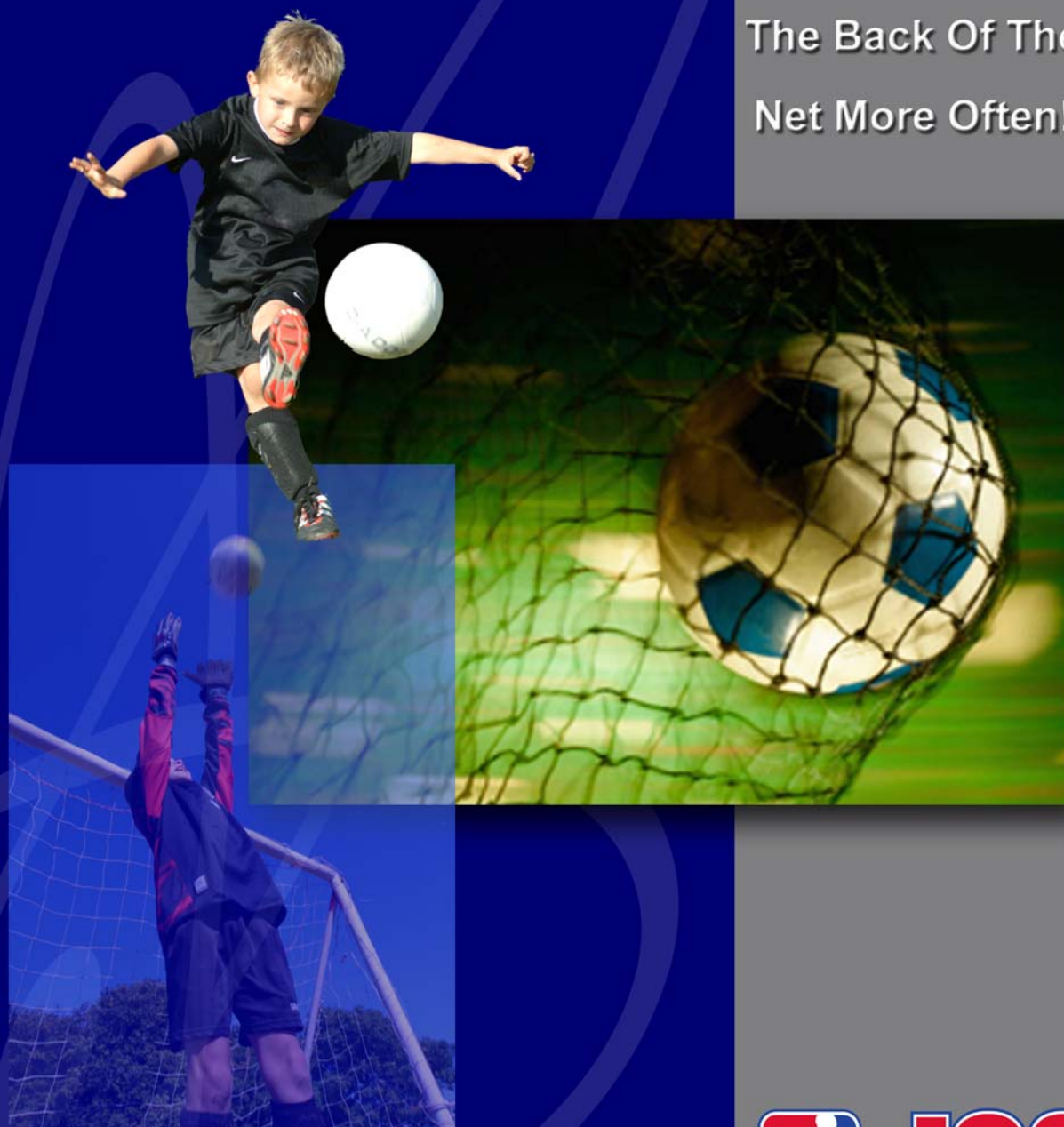


Secrets To Creating A Winning Team

How To Help
Your Team Hit
The Back Of The
Net More Often!



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Secrets To Creating A Winning Team

PART ONE

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Build your most successful team around the strengths of your players.
- Read about two systems in this issue and look out for more technical reports soon on other formations.
- With all of the information in Junior Soccer Coach, you will be able to build, develop and motivate your team to be the best they can be!

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A message from Neil...

Welcome to the "Secrets To Creating
A Winning Team"

Wow, what a title. The Secrets To Creating A Winning Team. But, isn't junior and youth soccer all about development?

Shouldn't they only be playing for fun and enjoyment? If you push them too hard, they'll be turned off by the game, too much pressure, won't they?

There are all kinds of idea's and notions that are thrown around when it comes to coaching junior and youth soccer, some good and some bad. When I talk about creating a winning soccer team, some coaches and parents shake their heads "its not about winning, it's about enjoyment!".

These comments tend to be from coaches who haven't a clue about building and managing a soccer team.

But what qualifies me to write this book for you? Who is Neil Travers?

Well for a start, I never played professional soccer. (I know all the Brits who read this book suddenly become all patriotic to our national game and say we don't play soccer, but I am going to call it soccer in this book because that's how its referred to by the 10's of millions of "football" coaches around the world.



Neil Travers
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So please bear with me. Thanks.)

However, I do know how to manage, motivate, inspire, organize, lead and communicate. I have had a burning passion for the game since I could stand on two feet and kick a ball.

For the last 7 years, I have increasingly become fascinated by the development and coaching of junior and youth players and have studied all facets of the game to become a UEFA qualified coach.

But when I first got involved in soccer coaching I wasn't qualified I was just an enthusiastic parent, who knew the game and wanted to ensure that 20, five year olds were given the opportunity to kick a ball around in a semi structured, safe environment.

Secrets To Creating A Winning Team



Use a pre-season contracting session to keep parents happy.

“Managing the sideline is just as important as managing the team itself!”

Neil Travers

My soccer coaching education began when I started to buy books and video's. What I immediately noticed on the video's was that facilities where the video's were shot were immaculate!

Manicured pitches, zonal squares etched into the pitch, full size as well as junior and youth goals all erected, no end of soccer coaching aids, cones, collapsible goals, hoops, poles, pop up goals, hurdles, the list of equipment seemed never to end.

And then my most important observation... no parents on the sideline.

Don't get me wrong, this is not going to be a parent or guardian bashing book, but in my experience you have to manage the sideline just as much as you coach and manage the team. In the rest of the book we'll be talking more about how to do this.

Then another light bulb moment struck me. Whatever happened to just throwing down a couple of jumpers for goal posts.

All of a sudden, junior and youth soccer has gone hi-tech. So let's roll back the clock for a second and think about how we all learned to play the game...

A bit of nostalgia...

No cups or medals, quite often odd numbered, self selected teams; no real

rules apart from "bad fouls", plenty of sweat, grass stains and happy memories. Sound familiar, it should do for many because this is how the majority of the adult coaching world learned to play soccer.

Street corners, back-alley ways, a piece of open grass, the park it didn't matter as long as there was enough space to set up a pitch with a goal. Lots of 1v1, 2v2, 2v3 situations until other players arrived and then joined in.

Mixed age groups regularly played together anything from 6 to 15. One thing I remember was a sense of fairness, some of the good (also known as skillful) older lads would take some of the smaller younger boys on to their team to even the contest up; however everyone would get stuck in as soon as the game kicked off.

Here are a couple of phrases and games to jog your memory:

- Stick or running goalie
- Headers and volleys
- World cup (one goalie, 6 outfielders all playing knockout against each other to get through to the next round)
- 3 goals and in
- Keepie uppies
- One bounce

What's different today...?

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Developing Teamwork and togetherness are just as important as developing technique and skill.

"Football is a simple game made complicated by people who should know better"

***Bill Shankly
Liverpool Manager
1968***

Secrets To Creating A Winning Team

Ever wondered where soccer education take place today? Where you live, how close is the nearest area where your players could practice as described above? Here are a few of our observations...

For a start there are less street corners, more cars on the roads and most pieces of open land now have houses built on them. We are probably more protective and cautious about our children's whereabouts than our parents had to be. The threat of an angry neighbour destroying practice because "the ball keeps going on the grass"! Were these very same neighbours never children themselves?

The other thing is there are more and more distractions that fight for soccer players attention, X Boxes, Playstations, DVD's, never ending channels on digital TV all keeping children off the streets, children who could be tomorrow's soccer players!

I hope I am striking a chord with you now about how we all learned to play soccer. It wasn't at some professional team's academy, where the facilities were five star and I doubt very much that you get to coach your players on such grounds either. I know there will be one or two academy staff who read this manual, if you are one of them and you train your players on such facilities, kneel down every night and thank your lucky stars.

For the rest of us, who don't have that luxury, I suppose we'll have to carry on, picking up the dog muck, removing the

broken glass, beer cans, filling in the molehills, clearing away the "angry teenagers" who just want some attention and wait for our squad to arrive (even if only half of them turn up) We then make the best of what facilities & abilities we have at our disposal.

If you are one of these people, I salute you. You are a rare breed and you deserve more recognition and praise that you probably get. In a small way, I hope that you read this book and learn something new.

Even if its just one small thing. Or if it makes you think about something different, or simply brings a smile to your face and you know that others are facing similar situations just like you then I have succeeded. If any of this applies to you I would love to hear from you.

Simply email me at...

neilT@juniorsoccercoach.com

...and let me know whether you enjoyed this book. If you have any stories about your own soccer coaching experiences, let us have them too.

OK, so what's in this book?

You are going to find some of my hints, tips and insights into coaching, managing and running a winning soccer team. In the season 2005/06, my team managed to negotiate their way through 30 games, unbeaten. That's right... 27 wins, 3 draws, 0

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A happy team is a winning team.

*"I would rather
play ugly
football and win
than play
beautiful
football and
lose."*

*Mario Zagallo
Brazil Coach 1997*

Secrets To Creating A Winning Team

losses. 85 goals for, 13 against.

Although you are going to get many insights here, you will find more in depth information in the pages of www.JuniorSoccerCoach.com

So I hope that you enjoy this guide and it brings your team some of the success that we have enjoyed!

Very best wishes

Neil Travers

www.JuniorSoccerCoach.com

IN THIS COACHING MANUAL

- Choosing A Soccer System
- The Best 7 A Side Formation
- How To Play a 4 3 3 Formation
- Using Small Sided Games To Develop Techniques & Skills
- Functional Play
- Ten Of The Best Small Sided Game Conditions
- Small Sided Passing Game
- 7 v 5 Possession Game
- How To Manage The Touch Line Effectively.

Inside Tactics

Your FREE Soccer Tip Of The Week.

If you have been sent this soccer coaching guide by a fellow coach and like the information contained in it you can get a free soccer coaching tip every week delivered straight into your inbox.

Each week we'll send you valuable coaching information that you can take and apply in your next training sessions. We'll also send you a free video drill each month.

All you need to do is visit www.JuniorSoccerCoach.com and sign up for our Inside Tactics Tip Of The Week. It's that simple.



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You must know your squad and each individual's talent within your squad .

“For me the ball is a diamond. If you have something that precious you don’t get rid of it, you offer it “

Glenn Hoddle

Monaco 1988

Choosing A Soccer System.

Whether you are playing mini, junior or youth soccer you should be keeping a keen eye on all players and tracking their development.

In mini and youth soccer, players should be encouraged to play in a number of varying positions. By doing this they learn what is required in all thirds of the soccer pitch and develop an appreciation for all playing positions.

Younger players can become more comfortable with the requirements and responsibilities of a position if they are left to play there for a couple of games before being moved into another position.

There are many benefits to moving players around at mini and junior football.

- They gain an appreciation of the position
- They develop an all round game
- They develop skills that help them where ever they are on the pitch. For example, if your strikers learn to tackle when playing in defense, your team can be more effective at defending from the front when they play striker.
- They learn about the different work rates required in different positions
- A variety of roles keeps them motivated

Although the same benefits apply in

youth soccer, stability in the team is equally important. However, that doesn't mean that you must always play the same players in the same position.

Unlike mini and junior soccer where unrestricted "roll on roll off" substitutes can be used, youth soccer at 11 a side only allows 3 substitutes per game.

Therefore, the use of players in starting positions is an important feature of any managers pre game plan.

But how do you chose which players to start in the different playing positions and what system should you employ?

Whether you're playing mini, junior, youth or senior soccer, you must have a basic playing framework that your players understand, train with and execute during a game.

However, a mistake that many coaches make is that they choose a system first and then shoe horn their players to fit that particular system.

The first step to choosing the best system for the team is to analyse what are the capabilities, strengths and weaknesses of your players are, and then review the systems that are available that would best suit the talent.

The best place to start the evaluation is with the goal keeper. The position of goal keeper is a critical position for the team. The keepers capabilities of shot

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Choosing A Soccer System.



Player positions should be rotated to develop all round game sense.

"Strikers win you games , but defenders win you Championships ."

John Gregory

stopping, range, quickness and reaction time will determine where to position the defensive line. This can make the game look a little scrappy, but it is effective.

When reviewing the defensive line, player physicality will come into the evaluation. As a coach look for speed, size, communication, determination, aggression and can they work well as a unit.

Once the goal keeper and the defensive line are evaluated, this will then begin to determine where the team will begin to defend.

If the goal keeper is athletic, reads the game well, anticipates build up, is quick over the ground and can distribute the ball well out of feet as well as hands, (and your defensive line is strong, tall, fast and aggressive) then one option is to play the defensive line higher up the pitch enabling you to play a more pressing type of soccer.

If the midfield players are equally, blessed with height, speed, stamina and aggression; players who fight for every ball when your opponents have possession then you could play with a full press.

This style of play would be lead by the strikers who would signal to the rest of the team when to press and win the ball. This type of harassing football requires a high level of energy and fitness. It can be very effective as opponents are not afforded much time on the ball and errors are constantly forced.

Quite often though players will have varying degrees of skill, stature and determination, all of which need to be considered.

In these instances a more balanced view should be taken, with a defensive line sitting a little deeper and letting the midfield players commence the battle in the middle third.

Here the strongest players can be situated in the midfield and dictate where the game will be played. If the midfield push up so do the strikers and the defensive line.

Where a team chooses to defend is pretty important when determining team tactics.

If you know your players abilities and play to the teams strengths then the opposition can be effectively broken down in the chosen areas and counter attacking soccer can be instigated long before your opponents have had the opportunity to re-organize.

In the next couple of pages we'll discuss two formations that we regularly use effectively in our 7 a side and 11 a side matches.

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The Best 7 A Side Formation



The 2 3 1 Formation is the best 7 a side system.

“The secret of winning games, competitions and leagues is good players working hard together.”

Neil Travers

We are often asked what is the best formation to play mini soccer. There are plenty of different variations on how you can structure your 6 outfield players.

You could have 1 3 3, 1 4 1, 1 3 2 or just let them all run around!

As we have already said you should know the talents in your team and have the flexibility to play players in a variety of positions. But what is the best formation for mini soccer in a 7 a side

In our opinion we believe that the best way to structure your players is in a 2 3 1 formation.

Organisation

The 2 3 1 formation has the following organisation, the defense starts with two players in a line who cover the left and right sides of the field.

The midfield players can be organised in a line or with the central midfield player playing ahead of the two wingers (more attacking) or slightly behind (more defensive).

The lone attacker should take up a position deep into the opponents half. Rules may change from state to state or country to country, but the offside rule probably doesn't apply in mini soccer, so the lone attacker can take this position without any worries.

Defence

The Left and Right Backs mark the opponent's forward(s) and are the only real defenders. They should be dependable and will probably play a supporting role in attack if your opposition retreat all players.

They should be encouraged to always be aware of what is around them. Their awareness and focus will probably be on where the ball is, which means if your team are on the attack they will be in spirit with the attackers, if not in body.

However, you should remind them to keep an eye on where opposition strikers are.

It's important that at least one defender sits goal side of the most advanced opponent, the second defender can hold more advanced positions and should be coached on how to anticipate an attack and how their movement can hold or break up an attack.

Even from a young age you should promote good communication between the goal keeper and the defensive line.

If your team is on the attack and your opponents pull all of their players back (like a retreating defense tactic) then you should coach your defensive line to move up to the half way line.

The goal keeper should also advance

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To keep young players happy you need to keep them motivated. One effective way to do this is rotate their playing positions.

"You have to coach the players' minds... get them to understand the need for sacrifice."

Sir Alex Ferguson

The Best 7 A Side Formation

to the edge of their box to anticipate a long direct ball in attack. Your goal keeper in this situation can become a sweeper.

Having the keeper engaged and advancing also prevents them from getting cold, bored and switching off.

Midfield

The left, centre and right midfielders should also be available to assist in defending dependant on where the attack originates, they should try to stop or slow down opposing plays before they get to the defensive line.

With only one attacker they can chase the ball and hurry their opponents, possibly forcing errors in passing. This then allows the midfielders to take charge.

Encourage midfield players to shuffle across the pitch when defending to close down space and limit the amount of passing options that your opponents may have.

When you team is in possession, encourage them to get width to the attack.

Attack

Left, Centre and Right Midfielders main consideration should be to distribute the ball among themselves and to the striker. Possession is key and steady,

patient build up play is required. Good passing techniques and movement off the ball, creating good passing triangles, should also be encouraged.

The lone attacker will have to cope with a game with few chances to score. The striker will also have to fight for every ball in the attack and do a tremendous amount of running. This requires the striker to have a strong character and high level of self confidence.

Good shielding and holding up the ball should be a key skill to enable supporting midfield players to catch up with play.

During mini soccer, rolling substitutes can be used and the attacker should be rotated frequently to prevent fatigue.

Remember all young players like being striker so this is an ideal opportunity to enable this.

Also, the attack should originate from occasional crosses and long balls down the flanks. In this instance the right & left midfielders should use the wings with the centre midfielder holding their position to be used as an outlet and keep possession or, if required, be on defensive duty.

In our experience, the 2 3 1 formation allows your team to be flexible in attack, strong in defence and provides plenty of scope for passing due to the amount of triangles afforded by the formation.

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How To Play The 4 3 3 Formation



Getting players comfortable with a playing system takes practice.

"The worlds best 11 players wouldn't make a team. You must have blend."

Len Shackleton
England Player

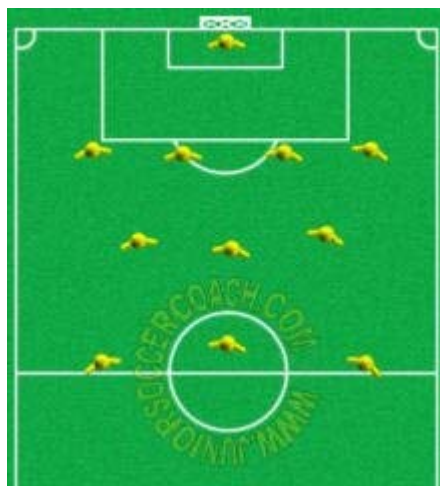
When choosing your teams formation there are many factors that you need to take into consideration as we have outlined previously.

The technical and tactical strengths and weaknesses of your players (and opponents); the weather, pitch conditions, physical condition of your team are all variables you need to factor into your decision.

Even in youth soccer, team managers and coaches need to understand the various tactical systems in order to prepare players, provide flexibility in approach before and during the game.

Some coaches change their formations on a weekly basis, others keep the same system for an entire season, there's no right or wrong way. Its about your team and the way you want them to play. let's look at the 4 3 3 formation.

The 4 3 3 system has a starting formation of four defenders at the back, three midfielders and three attackers, (see the illustration below).



The system is offensive in its nature as it deploys 3 attackers. The defence is organised with four players who can

either play as a traditional flat back four or with a sweeper played just in front or behind the other three defenders. The midfield can be organised according to your preference for offensive or defensive play.

When using a 4 3 3 formation, the ball should be moved quickly up to the strikers and the game is played in your opponents half. Midfield players should support the attackers so that the two banks of three work closely together.

A tactic used well in this formation is if the central attacker drops deep towards the half way line as if to pick the ball up, creating space further up the field towards the opponents goal, this can allow the midfield players to exploit the space by running into it.

A good example of this is to watch Dennis Bergkamp (Arsenal & Holland); he regularly advanced into space when the forward has dropped deep or out to the wing.

The midfield players link up play with the forwards can provide a balanced attack using depth and width which will allow your team to change the angle of attack easily.

Defending with the 4 3 3 formation occurs as soon as your team has lost possession.

If this is high up the field which is where you want the play to be, having three forwards allows an immediate press when possession is conceded.

The back four are normally organised in a flat back four formation with specific zonal marking responsibilities. With the 4 3 3 system the major weakness is in the midfield and this is where your careful consideration to the players who you play in the formation really count.

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How To Play The 4 3 3 Formation



Players must understand roles and responsibilities of their positions.

“A successful football career used to be about winning things. Now its all about how much money you end up with.”

Graeme Souness

To illustrate, most teams will play with four in midfield, so this means that your midfield will be over run by one man as your opponents have a numerical advantage.

However, if you have a player in your squad that is mobile, will hold a central position and relishes the opportunity to have a battle in the middle of the park then playing a 4 3 3 could be advantageous.

This midfield role is vital as they should also possess good technical skills like passing and link up combination play.

However, the back four should be able to hit a long ball out of defence and turn defence into attack quickly.

By having three players up front, high balls into a holding striker should be encouraged so practice this in training. Get your back four practicing knocking a long direct ball up to the strikers.

ADVANTAGES OF THE 4 3 3 SYSTEM

- Balance in attack with width and depth.
- Angles of attack can be changed easily.
- Pressure can be applied high up the field when the ball is lost.
- Space for opponents is limited and can force a more direct style of play from them. If this happens then your team should read this and adjust accordingly as the play will be more predictable.
- Less taxing system for forwards and can assist with squad rotations as less fit or slower strikers can be used.
- An attacking mentality is openly displayed to the opponents and psychologically they switch into

defending mode, expecting the game to be taken to them.

A balanced defence is still maintained.

Its a great system for the spectators.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE 4 3 3 SYSTEM

It can be easy for your team to be over run in midfield, therefore, your choice of midfield players must be up to the task. They should be mobile, fit and relish a battle.

If your midfield and attackers are not mobile and lack the combinations then the style of play can become predictable as the back four deliver direct balls.

Prone to quick, counter attacking play with a long direct ball by passing your attackers (and possibly one or two midfield players) means the defence will be stretched.

TACTICAL REASONS WHEN TO DEPLOY THE 4 3 3

When your team needs a goal to avoid getting beat.

When your team works well with a very direct style of play, e.g. when your defenders can deliver quality long balls deep into your opponents half.

Your team is playing against a traditional 4 4 2 system where man marking is evident. Mobility of your forwards, to pull your opponents out of shape and create space is a pre requisite.

Your back four should be able to cope competently with only two forwards.

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Small Sided Games



Players must respect the games officials.

"It's amazing what can be achieved when no-one minds who gets the credit."

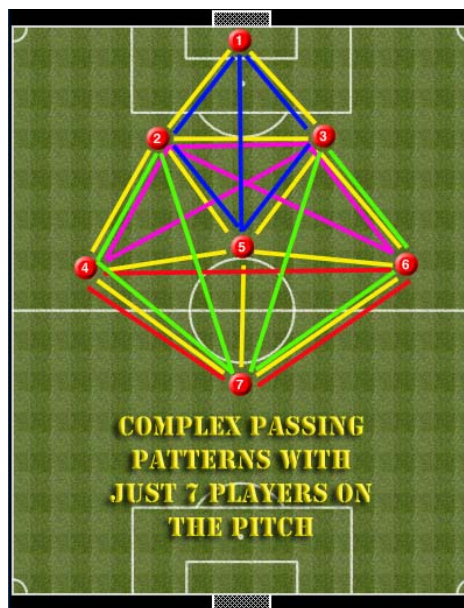
Howard Wilkinson
Sheff Wednesday

All levels of soccer can benefit from playing small sided games. From the professional teams all the way through to mini soccer, small sided games are probably the most effective way to develop technique and skill.

Full 11 a side soccer is a complex game, players face a continuous stream of problems created by the different phases of play, the interactions with other team members, where they are and who has the ball.

The players must draw on their experience, decision making capabilities and skill in order to make sound decisions and good technical execution.

If we take the two examples of how many passing triangles exist in each of the soccer formations discussed so far you can see from the diagrams below that there are many.



7 A Side Passing Patterns

It is no wonder why players can sometimes be overwhelmed in their position when you look at these

diagrams.

So trying to train players and help them become accomplished players can be a difficult task with so many options available to them.

Yes, it's important to develop decision making in your players, but to try to accomplish this with having so many players on the pitch and so many differing variables is hard. It is important that you break the larger game down into smaller components.

Many commentators, coaches, parents and spectators will watch a game and rationalise why a team of soccer players perform so poorly.

One key reason that will always be used is that players lack the experience. That experience is often match experience, the ability to see space and opportunities, to run and dribble the ball, to use feints and tricks to outmanoeuvre opponents, not just one but maybe two or three on their way towards the goal.

Many training sessions are organised with lots of drills and repetitive exercises involving passing, receiving, shooting, dribbling, turning, shielding but they lack the involvement of other players challenging for the ball.

This method of coaching, teaches players the "how to do it" but doesn't explain to the players the key decision making of why, where and when to do it.

These drills and exercises have their place, they must be used during training sessions so that good technical players are developed, however soccer isn't all about being able to trap or pass a ball expertly.

Good creative players know when and where to play soccer, they know when

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Small Sided Games



Junior & Youth soccer should be fun and played just as much for the enjoyment.

Technical proficiency increases because the players have more and more contact with the ball.

Neil Travers

to clear their lines and when to dribble and play the ball.

Small sided games stimulate young players because they are put in positions where they must make decisions, get their head up and use their eyes to see what's around them. They use their brain to make assessments of what they see, use their imagination and vision to create openings. Only by playing in games can this type of development take place.

Small sided games tend to have the five following characteristics:

1. Fewer players on the pitch
2. Smaller field of play
3. Simple rules
4. Conditions that help draw out specific problems during the game
5. More opportunities for players to be involved

Why are small sided games good for young player development?

More touches means more practice

When soccer players play small sided games they will touch the ball a lot times. This allows the players to repeatedly use newly acquired skills on a more frequent basis.

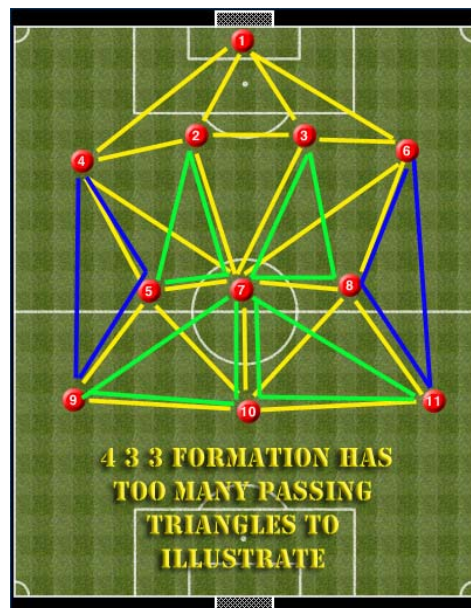
Technical ability is improved because players have fewer opponents on the pitch which enables them to concentrate on form, body shape, and surface to control as they have more time and space in which to operate.

More space and less bunching

Ever watched or coached young soccer players (U5's to U8's)? There is

a major tendency to follow the ball, however big the pitch is. The number one concern on players mind is how close to the ball am I and will I get a touch soon.

By reducing the size of the pitch, and the numbers of players involved, a greater sense of attack and defence is



built.

"The more players you add to a field of play the more options available to the players and thus the complexity increases many fold."

Players tend not to bunch around the ball, instead they work as a team more and take up positions that are appropriate to whether their team has the ball or not.

Soccer is more intense so there is greater learning.

In small sided soccer, all players are never too far away from the play. This has a massive benefit to the players as they don't feel out of the game.

When they are constantly close to the

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Small Sided Games



Encourage players to be creative in beating their opponents. Let youngsters learn to play before restricting their game.

"Make it simple, make it accurate, make it quick."

Arthur Rowe
Tottenham Manager

action they tend to be more engaged as they are constantly in the frame to receive the ball.

The more times they receive the ball the more opportunities they get to develop their skills. As their confidence grows, the more they want the ball, the more often they will get it and have more opportunities to develop.

This is a self fulfilling cycle.

Technical proficiency increases because the players have more and more contact with the ball.

The demands of smaller games are no different to that of 11 a side, but greater repetition enhances the development process.

This intensity also encourages more participation, hard work and involvement by players. It is far harder for players to switch off, day dream or not put the effort in during small sided games.

If they do it is immediately apparent and fellow team mates will soon give feedback to non contributing players, what ever their age.

One major positive is that when players feel like they have fully contributed to the game whether they've won, drawn or lost, you can bet that they will have had fun and a lot of enjoyment.

We truly believe that FUN should be a core component of every training session whatever the age of the players.

Better game awareness and decision making

Young players tend to lack the spatial

awareness and technical abilities of older players (12+).

However, to become a good soccer player they must be able to read the game, supporting player movements, opponent's movements, anticipate openings and spot vulnerabilities.

They do this by recognising the position of the ball, where their team mates are, where their opponents are, where the goals are, where on the pitch is the game happening, defensive, midfield or attacking thirds, and where they are in relation to all of these factors and positions.

When soccer players are thrust into 7v7 games the scope and magnitude of all of these variables is massive, however when we simplify the game by making the pitch smaller, reduce the number of players and simplify the rules then players can begin to analyse game situations more readily, spot opportunities and threats, and make better decisions.

More opportunity to play in different areas

As the pitch is smaller and players are never to far away from the action, they are presented with opportunities to fulfil a number of roles.

For example, if a team is defending and the ball breaks out, a player may pick the ball up and run out of defence towards the opponent's goal irrespective of whether they are a defender or attacker.

They can pop up on the left or right of the pitch, defence or attack. Due to the nature of small sided soccer, premature positions are not imposed on players and they can learn and appreciate the roles and responsibilities of all of the different positions on the pitch.

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Small Sided Games



Always have a wall to prevent a direct shot on goal!

"If I had wanted to be an individual I I would have taken up tennis."

Ruud Gullit

As they become more aware and confident in their abilities players will tend to gravitate towards positions that they feel most comfortable with.

However, the major benefit of small sided games is that players develop a more intelligent, informed and deeper appreciation of the game.

More chances to show their creativity

Soccer is a better game when there is flair, guile and creativity abundant on the pitch, small sided soccer games encourage this.

Lots of 1v1 situations are created where players should be encouraged to try new techniques for beating players: push out more responsibility to the players to decide how and when to break free of their marker.

This process again develops their confidence, fuels their self esteem, guides their self talk which ultimately leads to superior performance.

Small sided games are FUN

Younger players need excitement to maintain a level of motivation. Small sided games facilitate this as there is always a chance to win a game: Close games build excitement and foster healthy competition.

Here is your checklist of why small sided games work:

- Repetition increases success
- Fosters good healthy competition
- Technique is improved through frequent touches
- Improved decision making due to more time and space

- Fewer 'cues' allow more experience to be built
- Focus is on fundamentals and foundation building
- Improved role understanding
- Sustained and longer term enjoyment
- It's FUN

Remember small sided games are reflective of the street soccer that you played and grew up on.

Lots of ball contact, healthy competition and opportunities to score all make great ingredients for enjoyable, fun soccer for players of all ages and abilities.

How small sided games can help you coach the players better

Technical development is an important feature in coaching young players the ball mastery skills; however it's during a game that real development occurs.

A basic framework of technical development, e.g. unopposed drill work allows the players to familiarise themselves with the ball, their body and concentrate on movement and form.

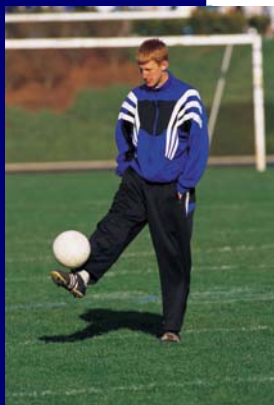
When coaching the technical development phase its important to use all of the communication elements available:- verbal instruction, questioning, listening and demonstration.

Allowing the players to practice the new technique gives you the opportunity to observe and analyse the critical elements to master the technique, however, progression must be made to develop the technique into a skill.

Small sided games provide the most

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Small Sided Games



Always have a training objective in mind before you start your session.

"If God had meant football to be played in the air, he'd have put grass in the sky."

Brian Clough
Nottingham Forest
Manager 1992

suitable method to achieve this session is.

Players must concentrate on the game, be aware of their position, movement, support and general reading of the game as well as executing all the required skills in order to play soccer.

However, there are some key points that you should consider when deciding how many players should be playing each other.

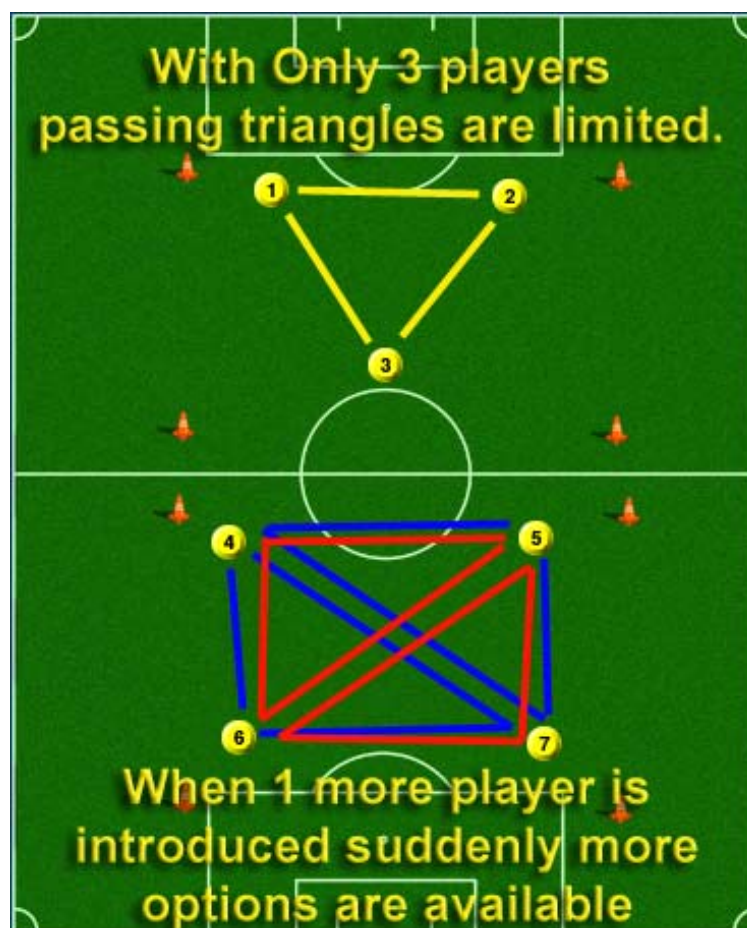
When you have small sided games set up you can spend more time observing "truer soccer game" situations rather than artificially engineered drills.

Being able to spot individual strengths and development areas is made more accessible as players are continuously demonstrating their skills.

For example, if your practice session is geared around passing and support play (and you chose to have small sided games where its 3v3) then there are limited amounts of passing triangles that can be constructed out of this set up.

However by adding one more player on each side the amount of passing triangle variations increases by four times.

The number of players that you chose to have in each team depends upon what your core objective of the training



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A good warm up is essential for both Junior & Youth Players.

"We looked bright all week in training, but the problem with football is that Saturday always comes along."

Keith Burkinshaw
Tottenham
Manager 1983

Small Sided Games

When coaching using 4 v 4 small sided games it's important that you follow the 3 key steps to ensure that the best development opportunities are provided and observed.

Step 1

Always set your key objective for the training session.

What are the aims and goals, what is the principle technique and skill that is to be worked on during the session?

Step 2

Develop your own knowledge of the technical elements that are required to master the technique and what skills are required for the game.

Knowing what the technical elements are will allow you to observe, analyse and pinpoint the development area of the player(s) and enable you provide sound quality feedback on well executed decisions and skills.

Step 3

Provide good feedback to the players, choosing the right language, providing examples, re-enacting situations, asking questions, listening, using demonstrations, testing player understanding and summarising.

You should ensure that you have a good understanding of the key developmental phases of players as they mature from under 5's to 16+ to enable you to coach effectively.

Small sided games provide ample opportunities for players to practice the core building blocks that are required of all players, whatever their position on the pitch...

They are:

- Receiving
- Shielding
- Dribbling
- Passing
- Finding space
- Support
- Shooting
- Heading
- Tackling
- Marking, closing down opponents and holding up attacks

Remember, younger players need more individual education and attention.

Therefore, it's important that they are given plenty of opportunities to demonstrate newly acquired techniques and skills. They should be able to demonstrate that learning has been acquired to give you an opportunity to witness this and provide tailored corrective and positive feedback to players.

Set players up to succeed, build their confidence and watch as their performances improve.

If you provide opportunities that allow the players to be creative, true solid soccer players will be developed. On the other hand, if growth is stifled at an early stage then players might not reach their potential and we may lose players altogether.

OK, you may be saying that this is alright for younger kids who are playing mini and junior soccer but how can you make small sided games work for youth players.

Well, small sided games work equally well with youth players but in the next couple of pages we are going to explore the benefits of using functional play and extended play to hone the techniques and skills of your players who are 12+.

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Functional & Extended Play



Let players express themselves in training and during a game!

"If the tacticians ever reached perfection, the result would be a 0-0 draw and there would be no-one there to see it."

Paddy Crerand

Manchester Utd &
Scotland

This coaching technique focuses on marking out areas or zones on the pitch with the objective of making the players understand the role and responsibilities that they have in that position.

It is also a good technique when you need to build confidence or need to work on a major weakness that is not only affecting a player but is also detrimental to the whole team.

In each area or zone your players will have a particular tactical duty to perform for their team and should through this technique learn their relationship and how to communicate with the supporting players around them.

For example, I had a young lad, (A left footer) who was brilliant at running with the ball and crossing.

However, he had this tendency to get drawn into the play in the middle of the field and quite often on to the opposite flank to where he should have been.

His team mate would look for him after winning the ball only to find he was in the thick of the action and was choking the play.

This method proved a valuable lesson to this player, we marked the pitch out so there were two flanks/wings and the centre channel.

He was restricted to only operating on his left flank and we encouraged the other players to use him often as an outlet as soon as they won the ball.

I'll never forget the Saturday after doing this in training. Sure enough he took up his position on the left wing and the play was congested in the middle of the park. Our team emerged with the ball which was moved quickly out in front of him to set after, while on his

toes sprinting into space he looked back at me on the touchline and put his thumb, as if to say it works!

Moments like this are priceless and make all the effort worthwhile.

Functional play is a great way to introduce new playing formats to players.

Functional play can be used for defending, attacking, midfield support play, playing down the flanks, or any other situation that you feel the players require focused tactical understanding in.

What is important with the functional element of the training session is that the players orientate themselves well on the pitch too.

So, set up your functional drills in the area of the pitch that they are most likely to find themselves in during a game.



It's important to hold your function sessions in the area's of the pitch that the players likely to experience during the game.

So set up practices on a full pitch so they can practice their orientation too.

Therefore, careful pre-session planning needs to be thought out as to where you are going to undertake your session.

Probably one of the biggest advantages of this coaching technique

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Static stretches should be encouraged in all players. To prevent injuries.

"It only takes a second to score a goal."

Brian Clough

Functional & Extended Play

is that players feel that you are giving them individual attention. You can create a great rapport with your players here as you impart to them what the tactical requirements are of their position.

This technique also works well if a condition is added into the game as well. For example, all attacks must be built through a central play maker or from wide positions.

This can be quite a hands on, time consuming technique for you. It requires acute concentration and attention to the position and tactical play of a particular position.

Functional coaching is best used in smaller groups and requires the commitment and co-operation of all players. Once a particular tactical function has been worked on and success has been gained, you can then bring in more players and extend the play.

Progression is the key to truly

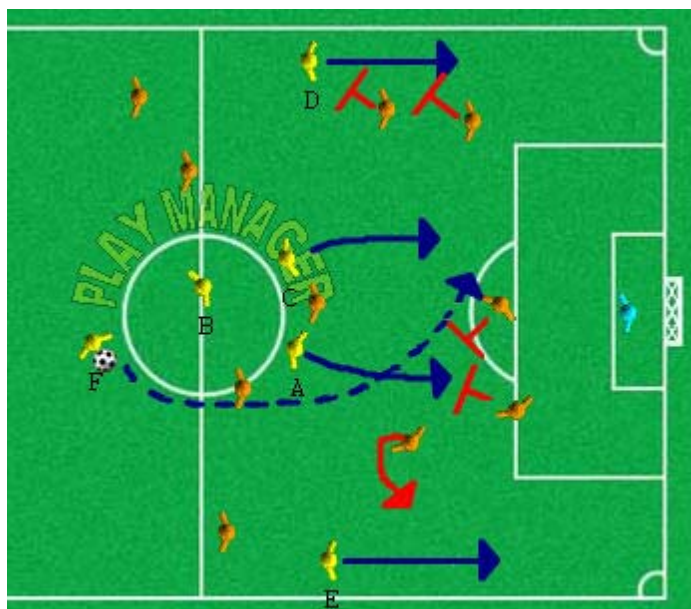
developing rounded soccer players, so as soon as progress is made with the player, incorporate the skill into a more complex scenario which should reflect game speed and situations likely to be experienced when playing an opposing team, this is where extended play comes in.

Extended play is a natural development from the functional tactic based coaching.

Extended play takes the foundations that were laid in the functional play situation and starts to build on these with much larger groups working on more complex phases of play.

As we've described in the earlier chapters of this book, the more players that you add on the pitch, the greater the complexity; the more options that are available to the players and therefore decision making is tougher.

The emphasis in extended play is working with more players and developing their understanding so they



Where it's possible, try to show the players the drill before hand. Whether you can do this through a diagram, tactic board or simply walk them through the exercise or drill to begin with.

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If you want your players to take you seriously then you must look the part. You can't turn up in jeans and a fleece top and expect players to respect you!

"Football is a simple game. The hard part is making it look simple."

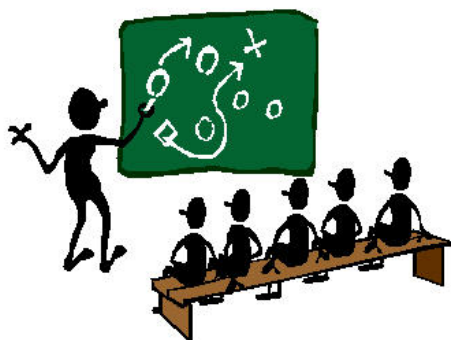
Ron Greenwood
England Manager

Functional & Extended Play

comprehend their tactical duties but also they begin to play as a cohesive unit by assisting each other.

You can read more about "The Player Decision Matrix" in the main pages of Junior Soccer Coach. But, good teams develop a kind of intuition or sixth sense; this can be developed by using this coaching technique effectively within your sessions.

Extended play should be used for defending, attacking, midfield support of either attackers or defenders, using your wingers or wingbacks down the side channels, or any other situation that you feel the players require focused team effort based around a phase in the game.



Players must clearly understand their individual and collective, roles and responsibilities as part of any extended play exercise.

Soccer success is built around teamwork.

This is a very effective way of building team work and understanding between players on an individual level and as a collective group.

If you get the conditions right, you can accurately reflect a real game which accelerates learning and is enjoyable to be part of, which is a key motivator for the players! You can give particular attention to a specific need (let's say defending) while also keeping one eye

on the attacking elements of play.

However, it does take some coach discipline to focus on the primary objective of coaching defending and not to jump in if you see coaching points on the attacking side!

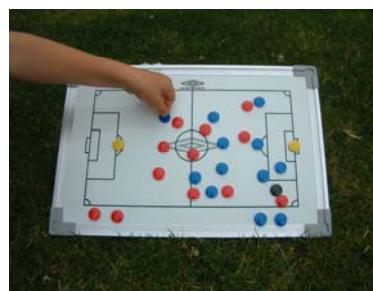
One potential drawback is that there may inactivity with some of the players as it is a group exercise; therefore you should be alive to this and prevent any of your players from becoming bored.

TIP

In functional and extend drill practice sessions, you should make sure that any feedback that is given to a single player is also backed up with feedback to the players who are on the same team too.

It's important that all players are affected by your feedback. Make sure that if you give a player feedback that you impart the knock on knowledge to those players around them too.

Imagine throwing a pebble into a still pond, the epicentre of where the pebble lands is the primary focus of your feedback but the outward ripples should represent all the other feedback that you give to team mates too.



Use tactics boards to clearly communicate with your players. These are ideal coaching tools to keep in your kitbag and get out when appropriate.

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10 Of The Best SSG Conditions



Goal keepers should practice their distribution techniques whether that's throwing or kicking.

"Football is like war. When the chips are down, you need fighters."

Ian Branfoot

Southampton Manager

Small sided games and soccer drills can be varied greatly just by adding a few extra rules to condition the players.

Conditions can be used to make the drills harder or easier depending what you want the outcome to be. Quite often in our drill progression suggestions we'll outline some conditions that you can implement.

However, if you want to condition your players differently it's important to have a variety of rules that you can implement. Here are ten variations that you can use in your next training session.



Developing a good first touch is a vital skill to play at a good level.

#1 One Touch

Quite simply, players only have one touch. Do not allow your players to trap the ball, or control, then pass. They must play the ball first time.

This means they must be constantly aware of where their team mates are, move their feet quickly to get in line with the ball flight and they must decide where they are going to play the ball

before they receive it.

This rule forces players to think quickly and anticipate the ball. When using this condition reiterate the key coaching points of thinking ahead, sound decision making, head up and vision, quick movement and communication.

One and touch soccer improves the skill level of your players.

#2 Two Touch

Here the condition limits the players to a maximum of two touches. That said, they can if the opportunity arises, play the ball first time. A player is allowed to control the ball with their first touch but they must play the ball with their second touch.

This increased time allows the players to focus more on anticipation. The extra time that they are allowed on the ball, even though brief, allows them to evaluate their options.

Supporting team mates also need to think ahead and use good movement to create space and be available for the ball.

When using this condition, specifically watch and give feedback on the players first touch as this will determine to a great extent what options they have thereafter.

Players should be able to control and direct the ball so they can properly execute the next phase of play.

#3 Three (or Specified Number of Touches)

Giving players more touches doesn't necessarily make the games or drills easier. For example, we might

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At home encourage players to develop their touch, by doing simple things like keepie uppies!

"It is a great profession being a referee. They are never wrong."

Arsene Wenger.
Arsenal Manager

10 Of The Best SSG Conditions

condition our players to five touches. That means they must be able to control the ball, get their head up, look for space, dribble, shield and bring other players into the game.

#4 Ball Height - Below Knee Height

I like the quote from Brian Clough..."If God had meant football to be played in the air he'd have put goals in the sky!". This condition focuses the players to keep the ball on the ground.

That means they must look for passing channels along the floor and minimizes the "hoof" football that is so prevalent!

Coach players on creating space, good movement and offering support.



Not allowing the ball to go over a certain height will force the players to play the ball along the ground, but they may miss out on heading practice!

#5 Ball Height - Head Height

Allowing the players a little more flexibility and some more ball manoeuvrability allows them to lift the ball but still discourages the "hoof" soccer.

Again, creating space, movement and

offering support should all be key components when imposing this condition.

#6 Neutral Players

Adding one or two players who always play for the team who have possession of the ball should ensure that there is at least one player available to receive the ball.

If you are coaching possession play, then identify a neutral player and the team in possession should be encouraged to move, create space, lose their markers, look for players who are free and not to force the play.

#7 Wide Players

Sometimes its important to have dedicated wide players as part of your drill or scrimmages.

Having players who stay in a dedicated wide zone, again are always available to receive the ball and change the angle of attack. With younger players, they always tend to come inside and charge through the centre of the pitch.

Adding a condition that they must look to hit the wide players when they receive the ball, forces their peripheral vision and changes their mode of play.

Encourage the wide players to talk to the players in the centre of the pitch, to give them verbal and as well as visual cues, and to remind them that they are still there!

#8 Keep Away Games

Develop your players all-round soccer game skills with these conditions.

In keep away games, the emphasis is on possession and not

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10 Of The Best SSG Conditions



Use player of the match awards to motivate players.

"The road to ruin is paved with excuses."

Booby Gould
Coventry manager

necessarily scoring.

Players should be encouraged to move and create space, move the ball quickly between each other, communicate well including verbal and visual signals, and more important, offer support to the player on the ball.

Two key game related elements should be coached too. If required, the team in possession should be reminded to keep the pitch as wide and as long as possible, thus stretching the play. Remember, length and width in attack, compactness and concentration when defending!



When you limit tackling in the game you should be focusing on control, head up, peripheral vision because the absence of an immediate tackle should provide players with a little more time.

#9 Limit Tackling

Interceptions are allowed but full blown tackles are not. Although this may sound a bit funny, no tackling is a great way to help the defensive unit.

You see, if they can't tackle the only way to prevent the attacking team from penetrating is to close down quickly, limit passing options and organising themselves in good defensive positions.

If you want the players to practice their dribbling skills then you may also impose this condition to give the player on the ball more opportunity to master the skill before increasing the pressure and developing the drill or game to full tackles!

#10 Drill or Pitch Size Restrictions

When assessing what you want to achieve in your coaching sessions, always consider what you can do with the pitch or drill dimensions.

Typically, if you want the players to have more time on the ball and greater range then increase the area dimensions. If their first touch isn't well developed then increase the area size. Conversely, if you want the players to be put under greater pressure, reduce the pitch size.

Two rules of thumb to remember, larger zones tend to favour attacking drills and games, smaller zones favour the defenders.

Narrow and long pitches will focus the teams efforts on advancing through neat, quick passes and combination play. The intensity is likely to be higher too. Short but wide pitches will see balls tossed into the middle of the pitch frequently.



Using the final third of the pitch is a good way to keep defenders constantly on their toes and makes strikers operate at the business end of the pitch!

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Always make sure your equipment is up to health & safety standards.

On Agents..

"It used to be wives that affected footballers, now its agents."

Bobby Gould

Wimbledon Manager

Small Sided Passing Game

The main focus of the small sided game is to practice their ability to control the ball, pass accurately, move and support team mates so that many goals can be scored. Let's face it, players like scoring goals and this small sided game provides them with that opportunity.

Good team work, communication and the opportunity to practice plenty of passing are all key coaching points in this soccer game.

ORGANISATION

Set up an area that can accommodate the age and level of experience of your players. Ideally for 12 -14 year olds you would want the end zones to be 20 yards square with two goals situated opposite each other.

The game consists of playing 4 v 4 in the area, with a team mate moving behind the end line of the area attempting to pick up a pass between one of the two goals depending on where the attack is building.

Good communication should exist between the players and they should also have their heads up too, so that they can see what's happening.

See the screenshot below for an overview on how to set up and coach during this small sided passing soccer game.

EQUIPMENT

An area approximately 20 yards x 20 yards, 10 players or more, bibs and a ball

COACHING POINTS

For the team in possession

- Close control
- Accurate, well weighted passes
- Movement and support
- Angles and distances of support
- Head up and vision
- Decision making and execution
- Transition from defence to attack

For the team chasing

- Close down
- Direct the play by showing the attacker the way they want them to go
- Minimise passing channels
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Quick transition from defense to attack when the ball is won

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Small Sided Passing Game

PROGRESSION

- No tackling to begin with, passive opposition then increasing pressure in the form of being able to intercept passes right through to full on pressure
- One player from each team stands behind both end lines thus creating four goals that can be scored in
- Attackers must play a one:two with the team mate behind the end line



Being able to get free, create some space and receive a pass is key in this drill.

"You don't need to have been a horse to be a good jockey."

Gerard Houllier



Don't forget to sign up for your weekly hints, tips and soccer coaching points that may just give your team the edge over your opponents.

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**Who said it's a sport
for boys only!**

***"The face of the
manager is a
mirror to the
health of the
team."***

Arsene Wenger

Arsenal Manager

7 v 5 Possession Game

Being able to keep the soccer ball while under pressure is a key element to successful play. In this soccer drill effort is focused on good passing technique, players getting their head up and looking for passing channels. Accurate, well weighted passes both along the ground and in the air should be encouraged. For the closing down team, this is equally a good drill and forces the players to try and prevent passes.

While this drill is confined to small area, and is suited to both outdoor and indoor it can be very game like with quick decisions needed and fast feet.

ORGANISATION

Set up a circle approximately 15 yards in diameter, or suitable to the age and technical proficiency of your team. Divide your squad into two teams and chose 2 floating players. Place 5 players around the outside of the circle and 5 players inside the circle. The two floating players always stay in the middle and are constantly on the side who are in possession.

The aim of the game is to keep possession by quick accurate passing around, and across, the circle by using a combination of long and short passes; using where possible the two centre players. I often put two of my midfield players in the centre to really test their vision, shielding and passing ability while under pressure.

Once the defending team in the centre wins the ball then swap with the team on the outside of the circle and the game recommences.

The team in the centre who are closing down should concentrate on marking the two free players in the centre and also covering each other minimising the amount of passing lanes that exist.

The two central players should also be encouraged to use their body strength to move defenders and create some passing lanes.

EQUIPMENT

An area approximately 20 x 20 yards, minimum of 10 players (4 v 4 & 2) upwards, balls & bibs, cones to mark the circle

COACHING POINTS

For the team in possession

- Close control
- Accurate, well weighted passes
- Quick feet, anticipating the ball and moving into its line
- Head up and vision
- Good communication
- Support from team mates

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7 v 5 Possession Game

For the two free supporting players, as above but with

- Upper body strength to move defenders
- Shielding the ball

For the defending team

- Closing down quickly
- Good communication
- Taking a line of the first defender
- Principles of 1st, 2nd defender
- Covering
- Forcing the play
- Minimising passing lanes

PROGRESSION

- Start three touch for the team in possession then reduce to one touch football
- Specify a number of passes that each team must make to score e.g. 5 completed passes in succession equals one goal
- Receive the ball with one foot and pass it with the opposite foot



Here the red team have possession of the ball and must keep it for as long as possible. When the white team win the ball they swap places with the red team.

The two yellow players always play for the team in possession.

This drill is ideal of high pressure, one touch, get your head up, know when your going to move the ball and where!



Encourage players to shoot from anywhere in the opponents half. And always have someone following in!

“Managers get too much credit when things go well and too much blame when things go badly!”

Graham Taylor
England Manager '93

“Coaching is for kids. If a player can’t trap the ball by the time he’s in the team, he shouldn’t be there in the first place.

*At Derby I told Roy McFarland to go out and get his bl**dy hair cut.*

Now that is coaching at the top level!”

Brian Clough
Nottingham Forest
Manager

Box To Box Soccer Drill

This aim of this soccer drill is to work the players focusing on their close control and shielding skills while they play 3 v 3 in a small zone and then testing their stamina and endurance by having them run from box to box.

This is a very good game like drill. Quite often players will be forced to control the ball in a tight area and then sprint to either support or defend if possession is lost. The dynamics of a real game are mirrored exactly in this drill.

This drill can be adapted to suit the number of players the you have in your training session. For instance we are demonstrating how this drill can work with 12 players on the pitch but it can equally be adapted for any number between 6 and 14.

Ensure that players get plenty of time to rest in between reps and make sure that you don't burn them out too quickly. Adjust 3 v 3 zone, time and the sprint distance according to age, usual pitch size and fitness levels of your players.

ORGANISATION

Set up a 5 yard x 5 yard zone on the edge of each box or according to how many players you have in the drill. If you find that the space is too tight then make it larger. Remember, younger players will need to have more space as their touch and control won't be as developed. Likewise, don't have younger players sprinting too far.

Using 3 v 3 or 2 v 2 if you have less players resembles what actually happens on the pitch in a tight area. The player in possession will probably have two passing options or they can shield the ball, wait for support or take their marker on and then pass. This is exactly what you should see in the small zone.

After playing for 2 minutes, give the players a signal to sprint to the opposite box and then recommence playing the 3 v 3. After another 2 minutes, give the signal again.

If you need to, begin by only playing 1 minute between sprints. You must keep an eye on the physical condition of the players.

If any player starts slacking on the sprints then their team mates will probably give them some feedback!

EQUIPMENT

Full pitch, minimum of 6 players, balls & bibs, cones to mark small 3 v 3 zone

COACHING POINTS

- Close controls
- Shielding and holding up the ball
- Quick accurate passing
- Good communication

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Even training games should be played at match speed to stretch your players, physically and mentally!

"The easiest team for a manager to pick is Hindsight XI."

Craig Brown
Scotland Manager

Box To Box Soccer Drill

- Support from team mates
- Sprints, fast footwork to build speed and then cruise to opposite zone

PROGRESSION

- Specify a number of passes that each team must make in the small zones
- As fitness levels increase over time increase the repetitions, length of runs and time played in the small zones

Box To Box



This can be a fairly high intensity soccer drill, so be aware of how much your players are putting in.

Give them breaks when appropriate, monitor heart levels and also provide plenty of opportunities to take on fluids.

TIP

Its best to finish your session with a drill like this rather than move on to some technical practice session. Players bodies will be tired after a session like this and you don't want them remembering bad technique because they are fatigued.

*“Only a handful
of junior and
youth soccer
players will
become full-time
professionals, so
ensure that all
players have a
Plan B!”*

How To Manage The Touchline Effectively

If you are coaching any youth or junior sport there will always without exception be an incident where you and the parents of the players will not see eye to eye. Over the years, I have experienced some sniping on the sidelines, others feeling that they could do a better job, but never put themselves forward despite the bravado!

So for every coach, what ever your sport, here are a number of ways that you can head these ‘problems’ off and practical advice which we use annually...

The first thing to understand is that parents have a natural desire for their child to do well, and some can be quite vocal in expressing their views. It is vital as a manager that you are able to lead not only the children but the parents as well.

As coach you will have to demonstrate open and honest, fair and trustworthy behaviours; at the end of the day they are trusting their loved ones in your care and voluntarily you are taking a great responsibility, one that should not be under-estimated.

You should bring the parents along with you so they become loyal and supportive and will be able to reinforce the skills, techniques, behaviours and attitudes that you are teaching the children. In doing so you will build a strong infrastructure and I have seen a strong link between this and the unity of the team.

The foundations for developing this bond with the parents should start right at the outset. If you are in the position of junior soccer coach then take charge, make decisions and provide clear leadership and direction from the very beginning.

Keep actively involved with the parents, most minor gripes if left unattended can become huge problems and sometimes very difficult to resolve if left to fester. This situation will only increase the pressure on you, distract you from your main role, that of coach, and will ultimately effect the behaviour and performance of the team.

At the beginning of the season a clear steer should be sent out the parents of what your objectives are for the season ahead and how you intend to fulfil these.

Ideally a ‘contracting session’ should be held with the parents.

If this is your first season managing the team, (whilst it may not appear to be) it is a tremendous opportunity to take control before relationships are formed with any of the parents or children and you are completely impartial.

If a face to face session can’t be organized, then as a minimum a letter should be sent to all parents of new and existing players to ensure there is complete clarity of what you are trying to achieve, how this will be done and what support you require. If you are entering into a club that has an existing constitution there will probably be a standard club policy, however, in my experience when it comes to the beginning of the season many coaches are left to their own devices.

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How To Manage The Touchline Effectively



Players should be encouraged to practice on their own at home as much as they can.

“Soccer is a sport that is all about passion, competitiveness and expression but that is no excuse for the behaviour of some parents at matches.”

Whether a contracting session or a letter, there are some fundamentals that should be covered, they are:

- 1) Background to the club
- 2) Your philosophy as coach (see related article Your Coaching Philosophy)
- 3) Training Sessions, where (indoor & outdoor arrangements), when and why
- 4) Subscriptions, match fees, player registration forms, photographs etc.
- 5) Time table of fixtures, friendliness, free days, tournament days (if known)
- 6) Meeting arrangements for away games
- 7) Procedures should a player be unable to attend practice or play in a match
- 8) Discipline
- 9) Players and Parents code of conduct
- 10) Match day formats including the use of substitutes etc
- 11) The Football Club as an organisation including President, Chairman, Secretary, Child Protection Officer, Treasurer.
- 12) The Football Clubs administration such as its insurance policy, annual general meeting, manager's forums etc.

This type of contracting we recommend at the pre season signing on session so that everyone has a clear outline on how you propose to manage the team for the forthcoming season. Any objections or clarity can be sought and dealt with before a ball is even kicked.

By following these simple, but effective guidelines you greatly increase your chances of a successful season, plus you'll reduce your blood pressure too!



Keeping your soccer players parents informed on all team matters and regular updates on the child progress will enable to you have a happy and harmonious touchline.

Don't forget, use your pre-season contacting session to set the tone and expectations for all.



Attention all coaches, managers and players -- New Soccer Training Resource GUARANTEED to improve both your players techniques and skills, together with your teams tactics and strategies.

At last a soccer coaching site for the rest of us. We are not ex professional players or theorists, who run websites offering standard drills but have never been near a junior or youth soccer set up in their lives.

We are UEFA Qualified coaches who run our own teams on a volunteer basis and have to deal with all the additional responsibilities that come with the territory, just like you.

That's why you'll find honest, frank, practical information, because the chances are we have been through a similar situation or struggled with a coaching problem and had to find a solution the hard way.

Junior Soccer Coach is a private, members-only resource for those who are serious about competitive junior and youth soccer, who want that winning edge, but more importantly, want an area to talk with other like minded coaches.

Within the private members only area you'll find a comprehensive source of in depth soccer drills and articles to boost the performance of your team. There are over 1,347 pages of cutting edge soccer drills with articles, animated illustrations, training idea's, suggestions and a private members only soccer discussion forum, all of which is specifically written by soccer coaches.

Once you've joined you'll discover --

- **Unlimited use of over 567 soccer drills.** They are all supported by drill objectives, equipment needed, key coaching points, progressions and more importantly multi media animations and video so that you can see the drill in action before heading off for the training field.
- Tips, advice and articles on **how to manage your team more effectively** both on and off the pitch.
- Real life examples and honest information on how to deal with the situations that soccer coaching badges just don't cover
- A **worldwide soccer community** meet here to discuss training idea's, match analysis, tactics and strategies in our Soccer Discussion Forum! (We have members from all 5 continents...!)
- **FREE UNLIMITED Soccer Drill & Training Programme Consultation.** Via email and with a detailed response within 48 hours guaranteed, we are ready to develop drills that are right for your team and programme.
- All pages are printable, so that you can quickly print them off and take them to your training session.
- A Cutting Edge resource that is ALWAYS updated with **Fresh Drills, that are Fun, Easy To Set Up**, and above all else Practical
- Coming soon... **exclusive interviews** with top caliber soccer coaches, including fitness coaches, goal keeper coaches, UEFA Pro License holders and more....

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