

# MAKING USE OF BALL MASTERY TO DEVELOP YOUTH SOCCER PLAYERS

**Ball Mastery and ball control has become one of the most important aspects of football player development for coaches all around the world.** When considering the need to develop technically better football players, ball mastery should be encouraged with young children when they enter the grassroots game, in particular the golden ages of 4-10.

There's definitely no doubt that in a bid to see an overall improvement in the American game, there needs to be a special emphasis on improving the players' confidence on the ball, utilizing individual training that focuses on helping them become more familiar with using all parts of their feet when in possession of the ball.

## THE BASIC IDEOLOGY

The basic idea behind this way of thinking is that with a higher number of touches of the ball that a player gets, the better the chances of the player developing better ball control and therefore becoming a more confident and adaptable player. We have been asked many times as to whether this philosophy about ball mastery on an individual basis can translate into the actual football game. The Germantown Legends believes that the answer is a definite 'YES'.

Developing ball mastery or individual technical training is not just about getting plenty of touches on the ball. It's about the quality of touches that a player can get on a ball, with coaches supporting, developing and graduating sessions making sure that the young players are being appropriately pushed to stretch and test their abilities in a range of game scenarios. This helps to ensure that young players are able to transfer their skills into actual game craft.

## 1v1 IS IMPERATIVE

**One of the most important aspects of mastering ball control is to ensure that young children are confident on the ball especially in 1v1 situations. When facing difficult 1v1 situations, a player is forced to learn how to make use of better movement patterns, learning to become unpredictable against their opponent.**

**Ball mastery in tandem with 1v1 techniques is going to help young players improve their movement and help them become more confident in their decision making when on the ball. And of course, as players develop more confidence on the ball, they are more likely to make use of both feet for passing and for shooting. There's no player that's as dangerous as someone who's willing to shoot and shoot well using either foot, and knows how to retain the ball well.**

## BALL MASTERY- A DELIBERATE PRACTICE

Quite a lot of coaches leave it to the children to show them what they've got. The issue is that if there's no pressure on a player, there is barely any chance of that player being able to implement ball mastery, skills or feints in the actual game. There should be deliberate ball mastery sessions that coaches conduct, where the players are facing game scenarios, and have to control and manipulate the ball at the pace of an actual game being played. The more challenging it gets for the young player, the better the chances are of them developing their skills into real assets.

It is also important to note that if you introduce children to new techniques and then let them explore those techniques, you will be helping them become more creative alongside becoming confident with the ball. Coaching technique whilst allowing children to improvise on the detail at the grassroots level will lead to better players over time, be patient, by installing ball mastery into session plans young players will continue to improve their game and perhaps dominate as they grow older.

## NO Need to Purchase Goals for 'Team' Training Sessions

As we are focusing on 'ball control', please use **CONES** 'gates' (2-paces apart) for all goals.

- Reward players who dribble through cone 'gates' while controlling the ball.
- By using cone 'gates', you are emphasizing ball control over just kicking the ball when pressure is felt.
- When dribbling or scoring using cone 'gates', ball must remain **ON THE GROUND** and **NOT HIT ANY CONES** to count as a score!

Additional scoring option/ progression... each time, keeping the ball on the ground and NOT hitting any cones.

- Pass through the 'gate'
- Pass through the 'gate' to a teammate on the other side

Using small 'Pugg-like' goals, just like using a full field or large area, encourages players to just kick the ball when they feel any pressure at all.



# END OF TRAINING SCRIMMAGES

- Do NOT go 'full' field... kids do not need endurance training, and 'full-field' activities only encourage kicking... we need to stay focused on 'ball control' especially in smaller, confined spaces!
- Avoid shouting 'spread out'... just play smaller numbers (letting them see their value without the ball)
- Keep numbers low, **especially lower than your 'game' format** ... 2v2, 2v3, 3v3, 3v4, 4v4. Scrimmages should ALWAYS be lower than your age group's format. Lower numbers keep ALL of the kids engaged, less chance to become a spectator (or hide on the field). **Small-sided activities will naturally teach your players the value of 'spreading out'.**
- Focus on these soccer skills – dribbling, ball manipulation and first touch.
- Celebrate when they dribble! ...do a special move to beat a player or do a move to work themselves out of a difficult situation!
- Coaching during scrimmages is NOT recommended, unless you are playing with them (and then, only coach the team you are playing with.)
- Make dribbling and ball control have a higher value when scoring ... Goals are only scored by keeping the ball on the ground and **NOT** hitting a cone!
  - End zone games
  - Multi goal games (FUNiño)... 2-goal, Target Goal (ball on a cone), 3-goal
  - Cones for goals as 'Gates'... each time, keeping the ball ON THE GROUND and NOT hitting any cones
    - Cones are 'two paces' apart
    - Dribble through the gate for a score... stopping to control the ball
    - Ball passes through the gate on the ground without touching a cone ('Club' rule)
    - **Target Game** - Receive ball in target area or thru gate with control (1- 2 touches)
    - **4-touch or 1-touch** – if you cannot play 1-touch, must take 4 touches
    - **Non-Dominant Foot** – only 1-touch with dominant foot, multiple with non-dominant
    - **High Pressure** – split the pitch into thirds, if you win the ball in top 3<sup>rd</sup> and score its worth 3 goals
    - **Counter-Attack**... score within access of winning the ball is worth 3 points
    - **Passes Equals Goals** – consecutive passes equals points

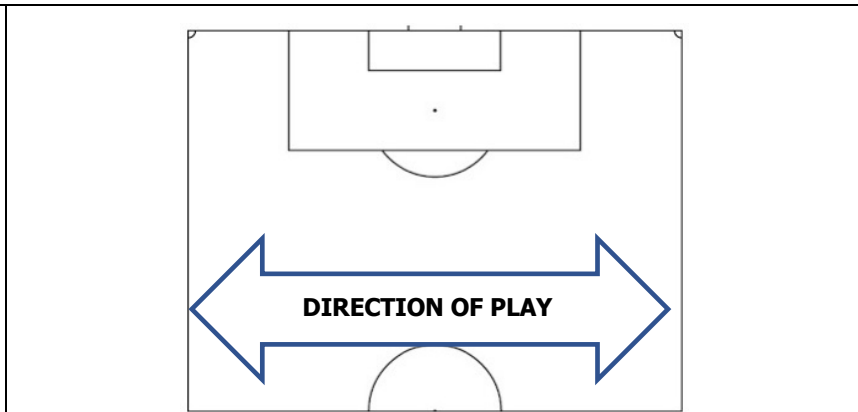
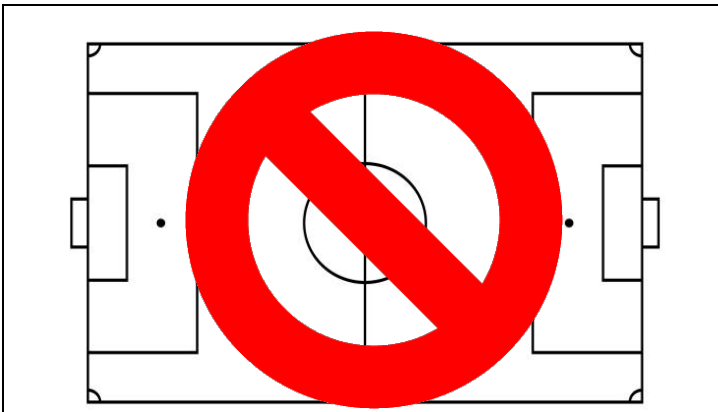
Several practice plans are posted online... [PracticePlans.GermantownLegends.com](http://PracticePlans.GermantownLegends.com)

Send an email to [info@GermantownLegends.com](mailto:info@GermantownLegends.com) for more suggestions.

Also, at the younger ages, using small 'Pugg-like' goals (just like using large spaces) is **highly discouraged** (especially in the early months of the season), as it encourages players to just kick the ball when they feel any pressure at all.

**NO** to full field scrimmages using full format numbers

**YES, to small-sided games!**



**FULL FIELD**

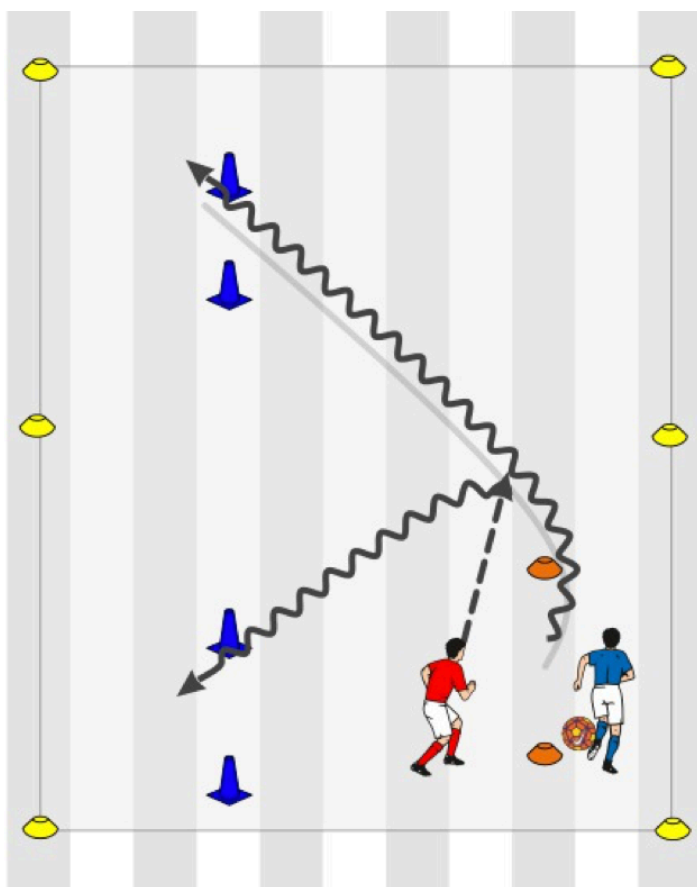
- Encourages 'kicking' over dribbling
- Less touches on the ball per player
- Players are able to hide when tired
- Player development stagnated
- Saturday matches lose their luster
- Some players are forced to watch – **NOT** play

**HALF FIELD OR SMALLER**

- Emphasizes ball control
- More touches on the ball per player
- Keeps players active and engaged in the game
- Players develop quicker
- Helps to make Saturday matches special
- Everyone can play at the same time

**Also, by using the width of the field for scrimmages, we are protecting and preserving the goal areas for matches.**

# 1v1 to Get Around



## 1 v 1

- Individual attacking
- Ball Control Dribbling
- Running with the Ball
- Turning

**Objective:** Improve Individual Attacking ability to get around an opponent

### Description

15x12 yard grid.

Place cones inside grid on end line and 4 yards off.

Create 2 'gates' as shown about 3-4 yards wide. Attacker dribbles to cone at speed then tries to dribble through either gate.

Defender begins trying to win possession once the attacker gets to the cone and scores by dribbling back across starting cone.

Award more points for dribbling through the gates.

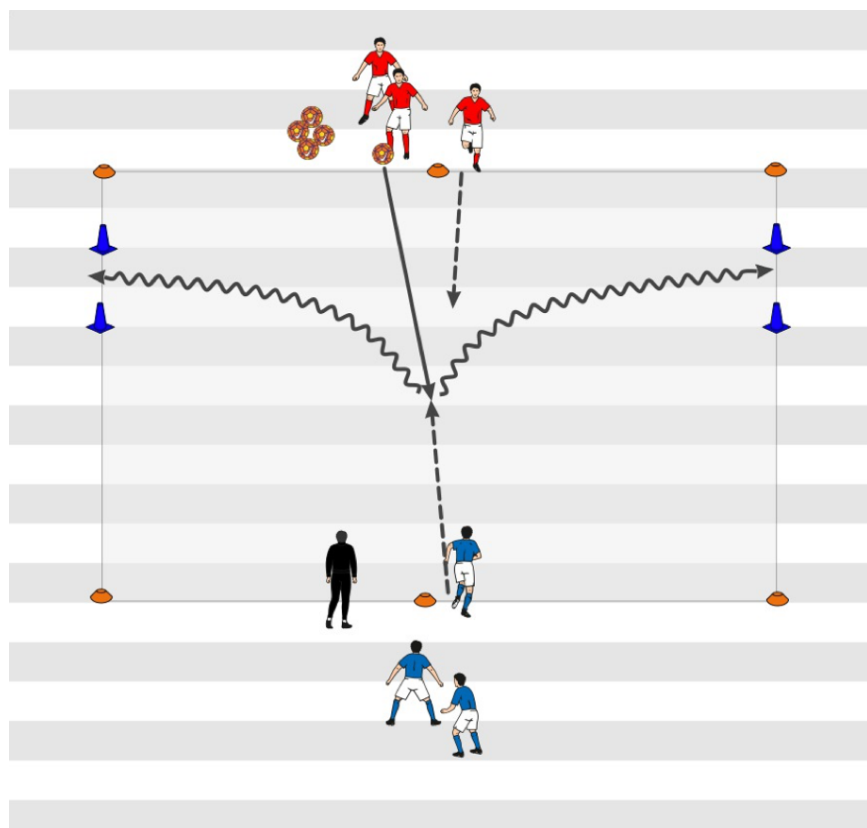
### Key Points

Keep the ball close with small touches (pinky toe or top of foot) then a big touch to get away. Use 'Stop-Start' move to lose defender. Accelerate away.

# 1v1 to Get Away

## 1 v 1

- Individual attacking
- Ball Control Dribbling
- Running with the Ball
- Turning



**Objective:** Improve Individual Attacker's ability to get away from defender.

### Description

12x15 yard grid with 2 'gates' on each side as shown.

Players divide themselves on opposite sides.

2<sup>nd</sup> defender begins game with pass to opposite side.

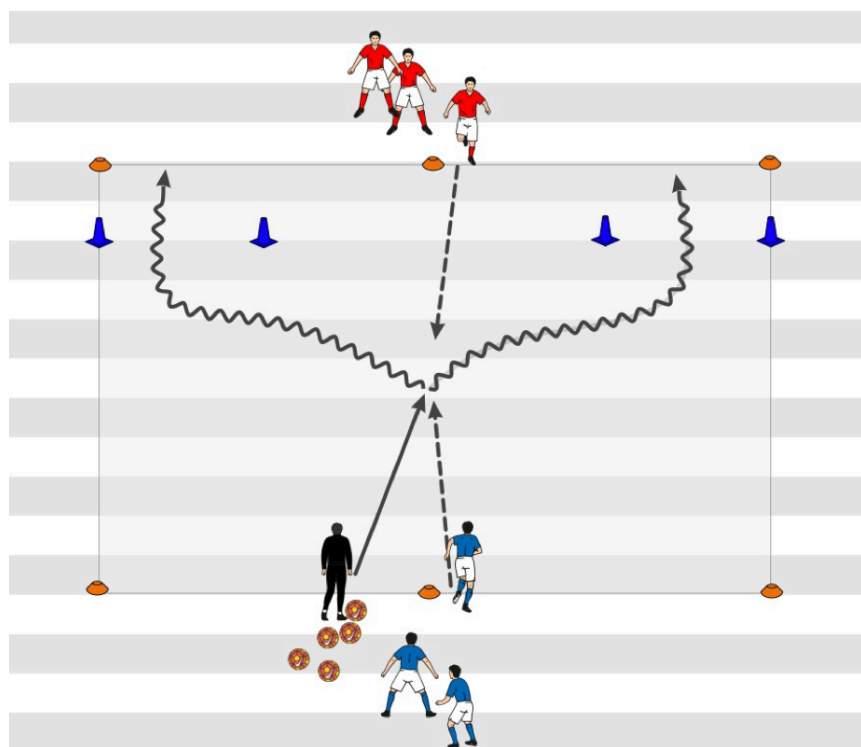
Attacker comes to meet the ball then dribbles through either gate while defender tries to win possession.

If defender wins possession, they try to dribble through either gate

### Key Points

Use small touches (top of foot or pinky toe) to keep ball close. Use changes of direction speed to get away from defender. Use fakes, feints and moves (stop-start) to get away from defender. Accelerate with a big touch.

# 1v1 to Get Behind



## 1 v 1

- Individual attacking
- Ball Control Dribbling
- Running with the Ball
- Turning

**Objective:** Improve Individual Attacker's ability to get behind a defender.

### Description

12x15 yard grid with 2 'gates' on each side as shown.

Players divide themselves on opposite sides. 2nd defender begins game with pass to opposite side. Attacker comes to meet the ball then dribbles through either gate while defender tries to win possession.

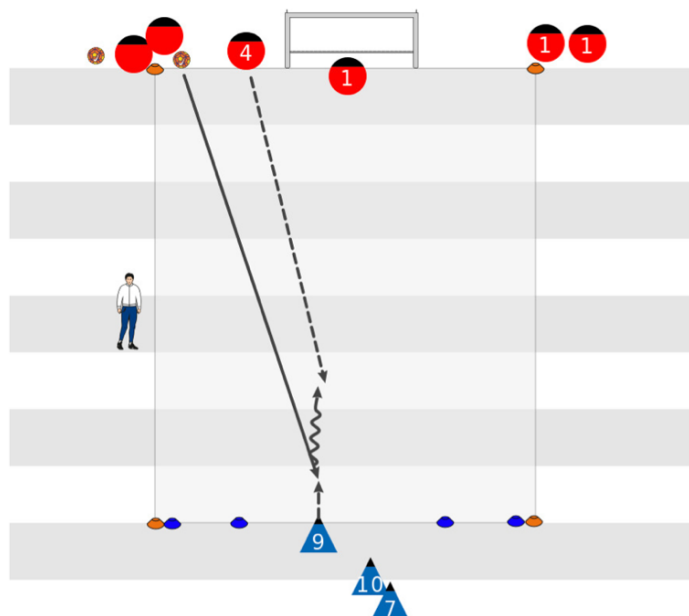
If defender wins possession, they try to dribble to the attacker's line.

Players switch sides after each attempt.

### Key Points

Use small touches (top of foot or pinky toe) to keep ball close. Use fakes, feints and moves (stop-start) to get defender off balance. Use changes of direction speed to get behind defender. Accelerate with a big touch.

# 1v1 to Large Goal and Two Gates with GK/ Defender



## 1 v 1

- Individual attacking
- 1v1 Defending
- Defending Positioning
- Goalkeeping - Shot Stopping

### Objective

Improve the following: 1v1 defending, 1v1 attacking, and goalkeeper angle play and shot stopping

### Description

- 16x20 yard area with a large goal and 2 'gates' on the opposite end.
- Defender passes the ball to the attacker to begin the game. **(For U5/ U6, coaches make the pass.)**
- Attackers must take a minimum of 'TWO touches' before shooting the ball.
- NO GK or second defender until U9/ U10.
- Players rotate from Attacker to Goalkeeper to Defender lines

### Key Points

#### Attackers:

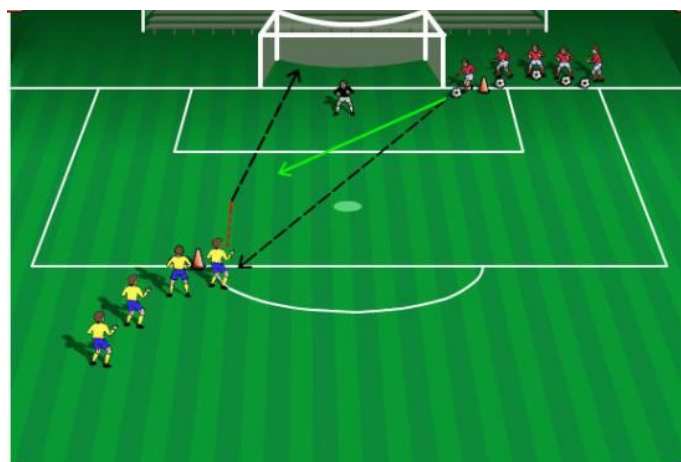
- Attack space.
- Make space with a move
- Find a window to shoot!
- Toes down, curled under your foot. Make a fist in the shoe. Strike through the center of the ball to target with the big toe bone. Control the follow through.

#### Defenders

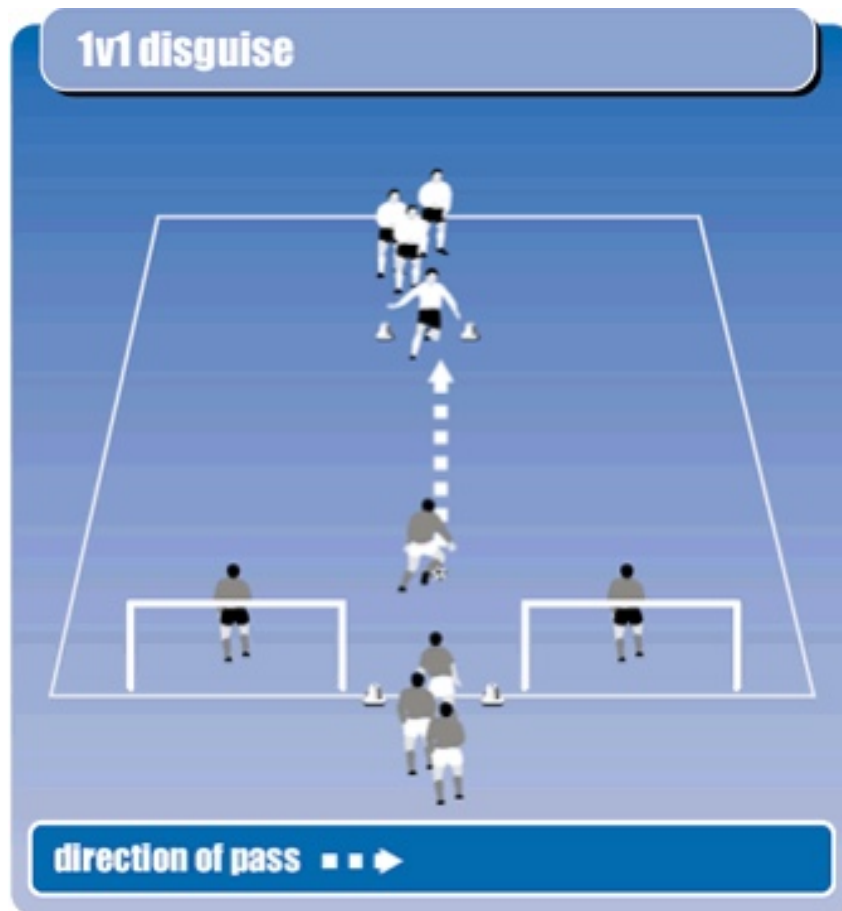
- Press with **FAST approach**, slow arrival.
- Posture - knees bent, 1-foot forward, hand up, happy feet.
- Patience - wait, tackle with a 100% chance to win the ball

#### Goalkeeping (if applicable by age)

- Gorilla stance on the ball line,
- Low contour - knee down but not to ground, pinkies together, bank it!
- Mid contour - knees bent, thumbs and pointers together, elbows in, bank it.
- High contour - thumbs and pinkies together, catch at your highest point, bank it.



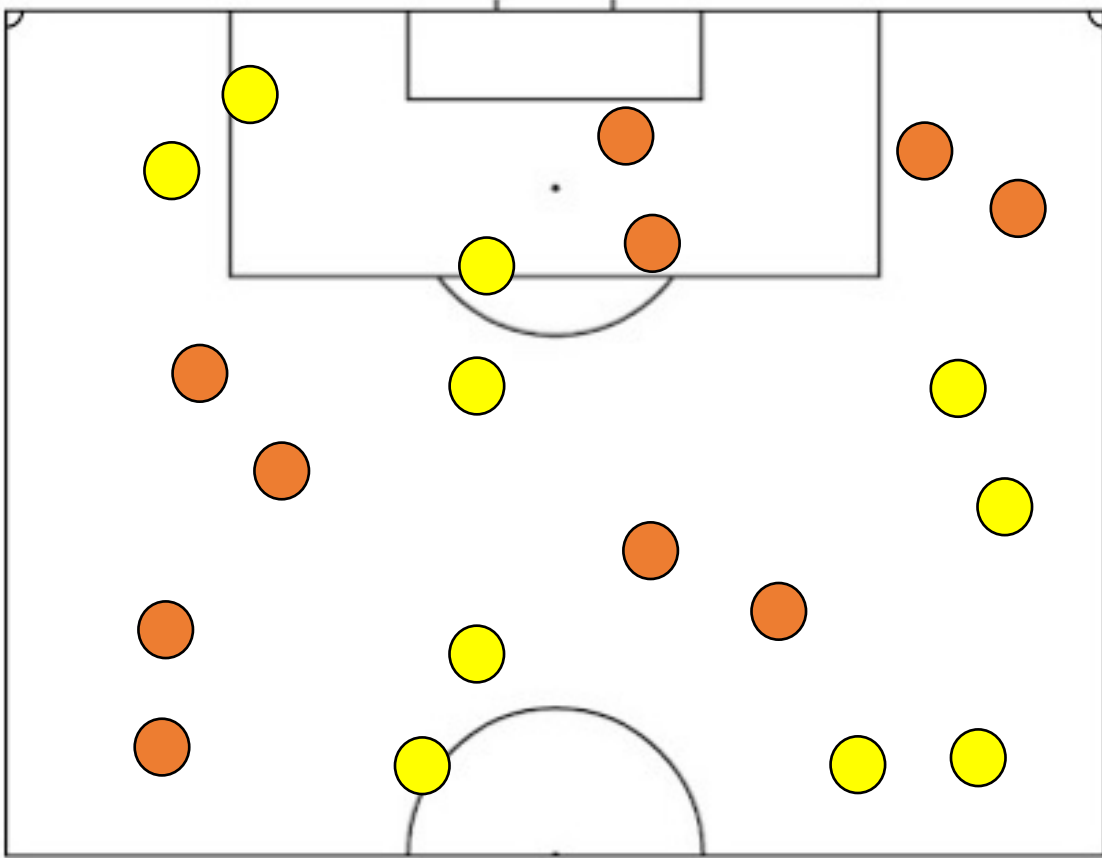
# 1v1 Disguise



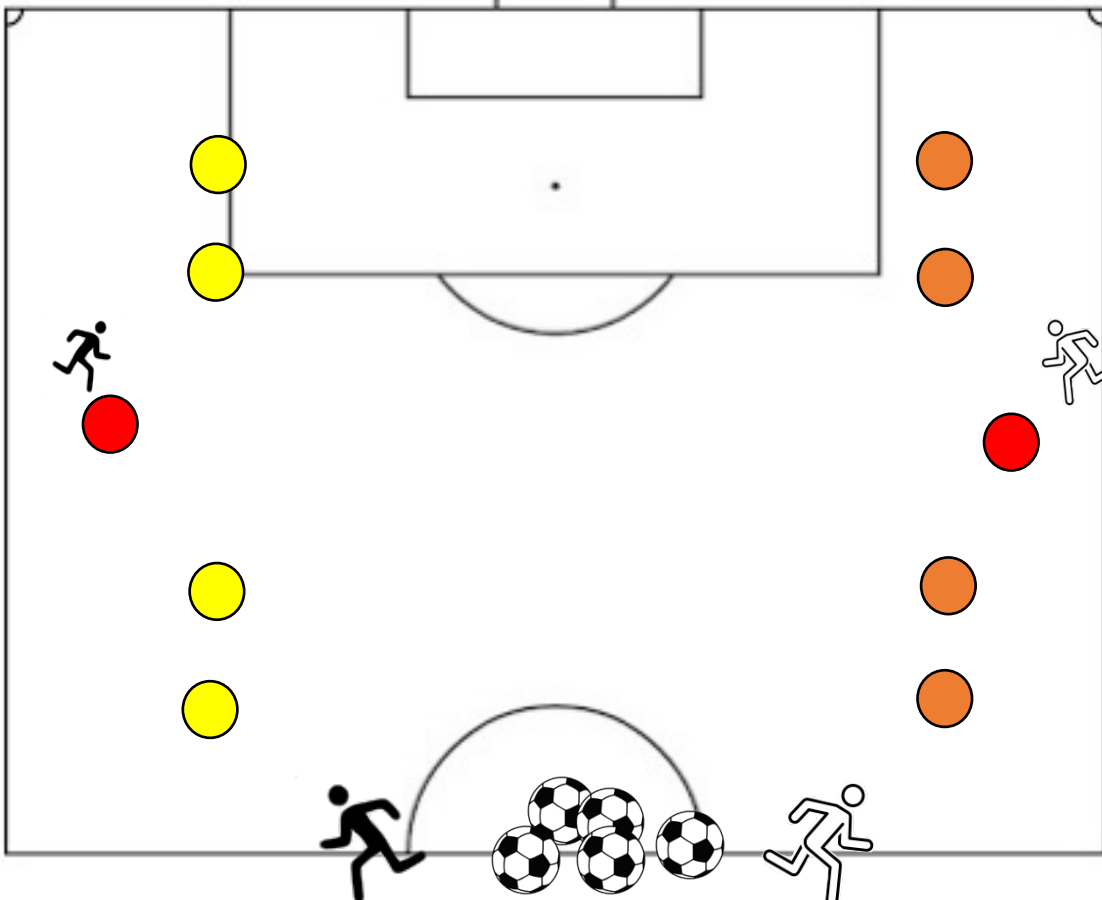
To begin, Defender passes to Attacker  
Attacker attempts to score in either of the two goals or 'gates'.

# RANDOM GATES

One less gate than there are players on each team.

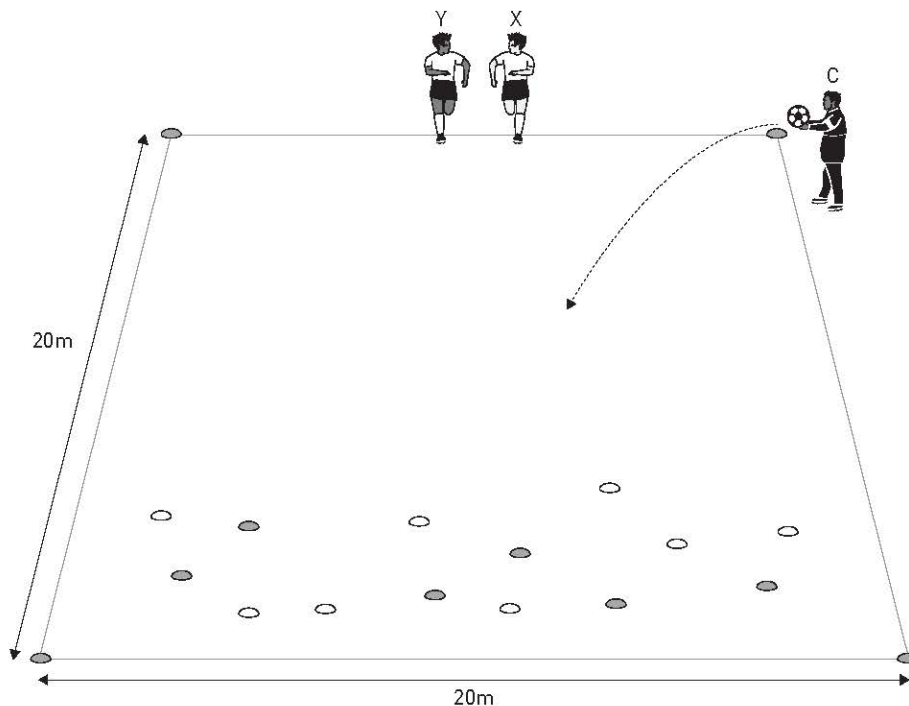


# 1v1 ON THE RUN (Coach puts ball in play....1v1, 1v2, 2v2)





# ACTION BALL



**Organisation:** Set out a 20 x 20m area with a large number of different coloured small cones scattered at one end. Set up players into two teams (X and Y), with players competing 1 v 1 inside the area.

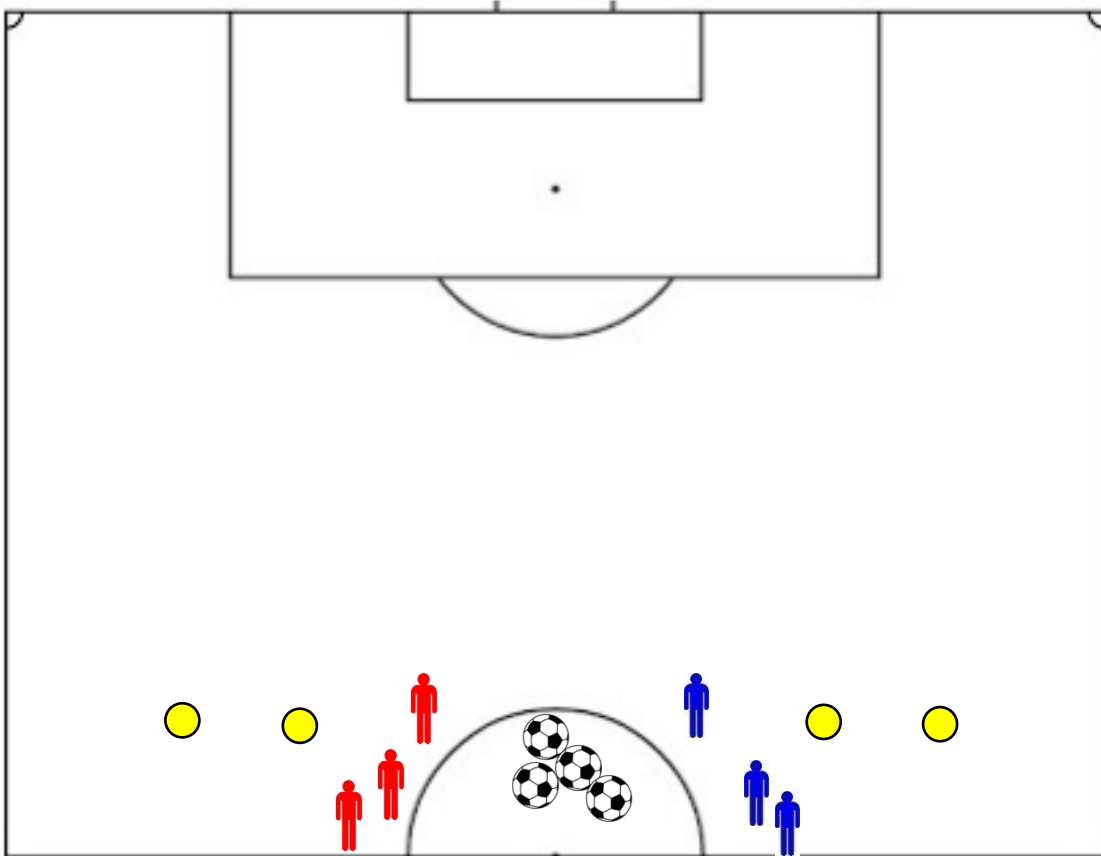
**Equipment:** Marker cones, bibs, football.

**Description:** With one player from each team starting in the centre on the baseline, the coach calls out a colour and then throws the ball into the area. The players then race to the opposite end to touch the cone of that colour and then to the ball. Whichever player is first to collect the ball wins a point for their team.

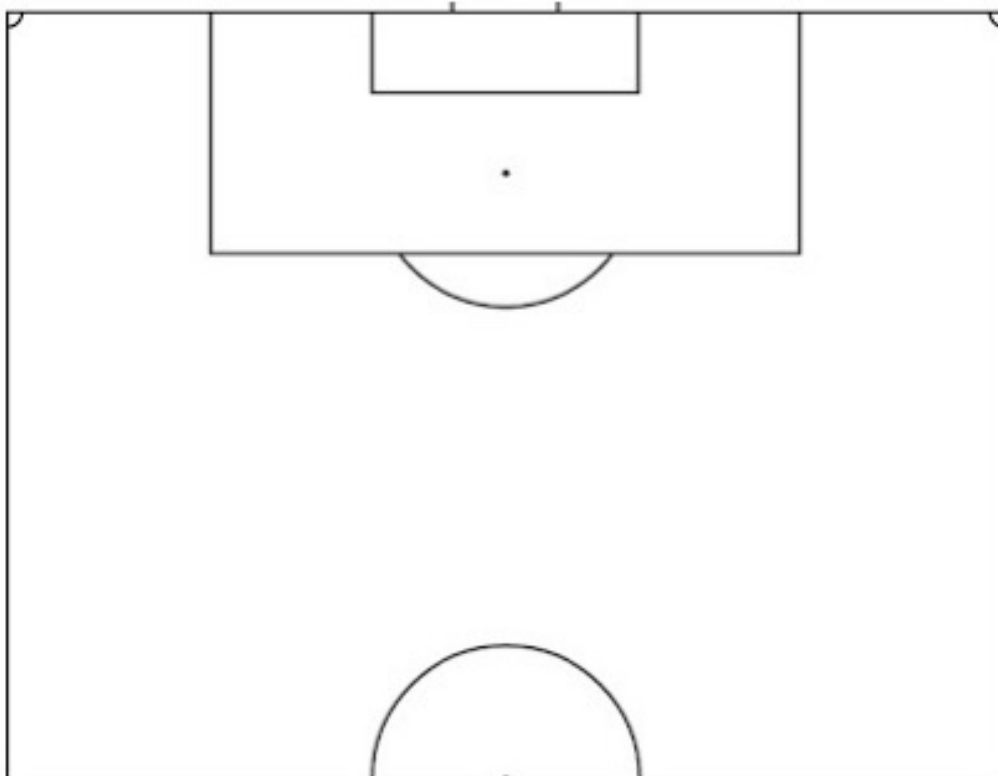
**Key coaching points:** React quickly to get to the cone and back to the ball. Spatial awareness.

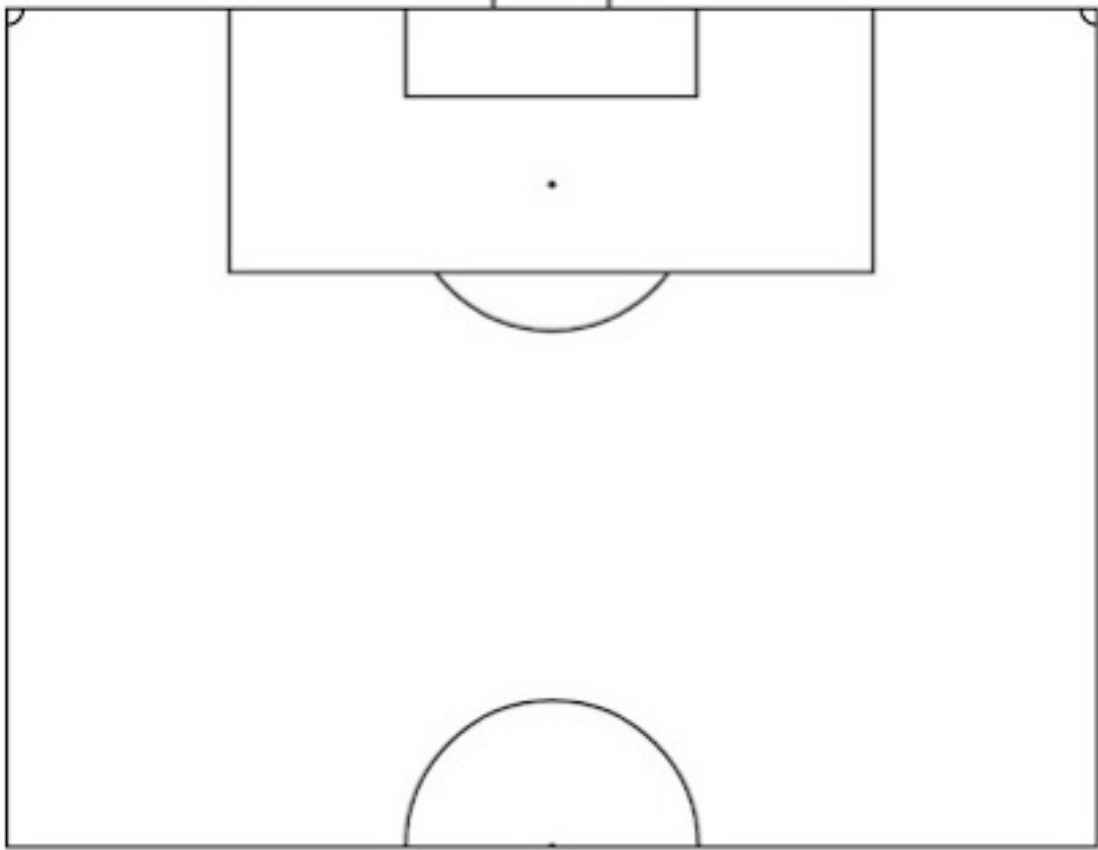
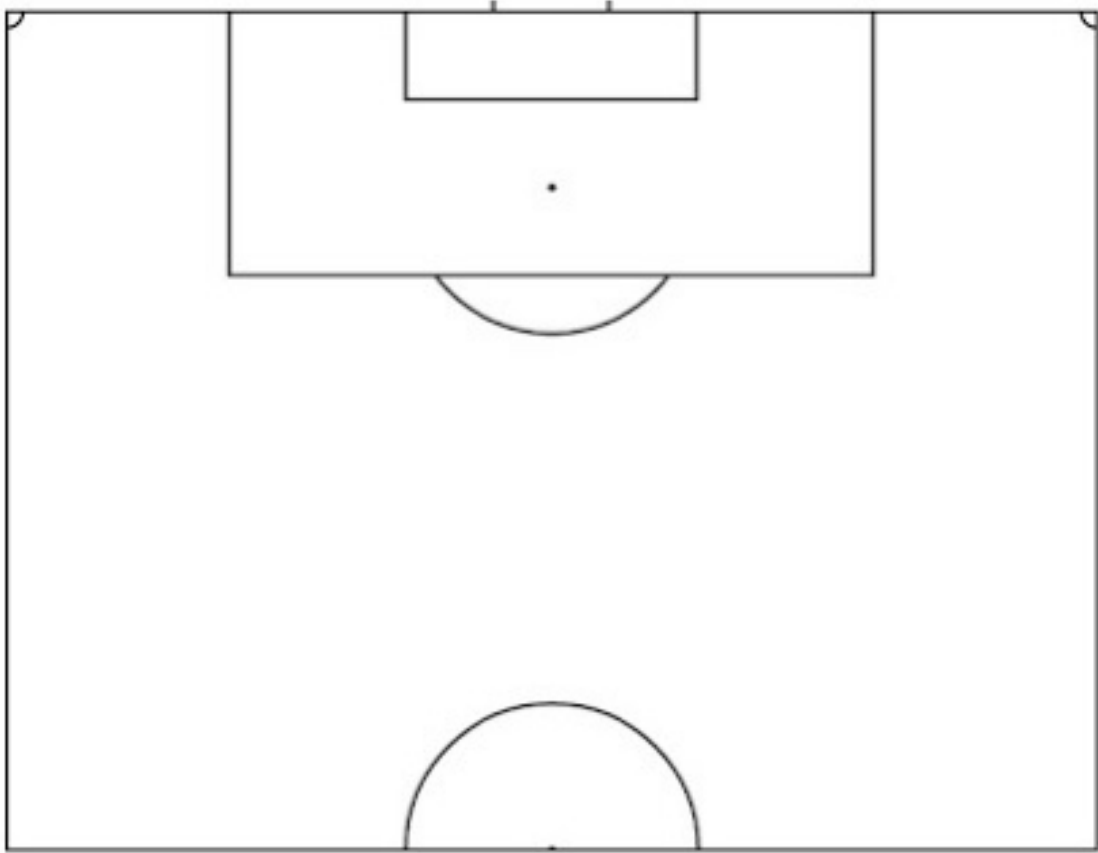
**Progressions:** Play 2 v 2 in pairs, the coach throws three footballs into the area. The pair that gets two balls wins the point. Develop into a passing practice with players having to dribble the ball back to the coach.

# 1v1 RETURN TO GATES/ GOALS

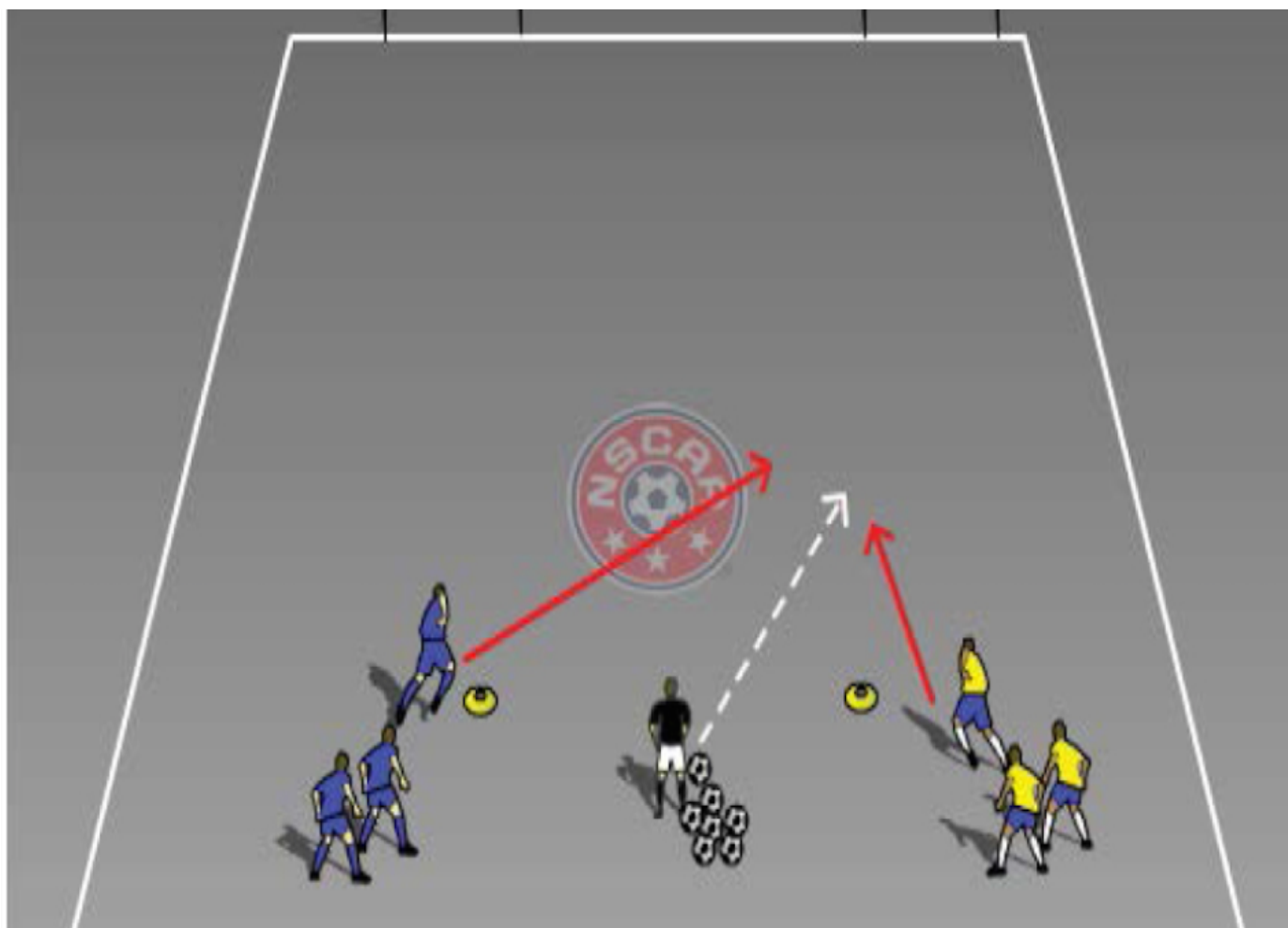


Players are stationed near the goals in two separate groups.  
Ball played 10- 15 yards into field.  
Players return ball to either gate/ goal.





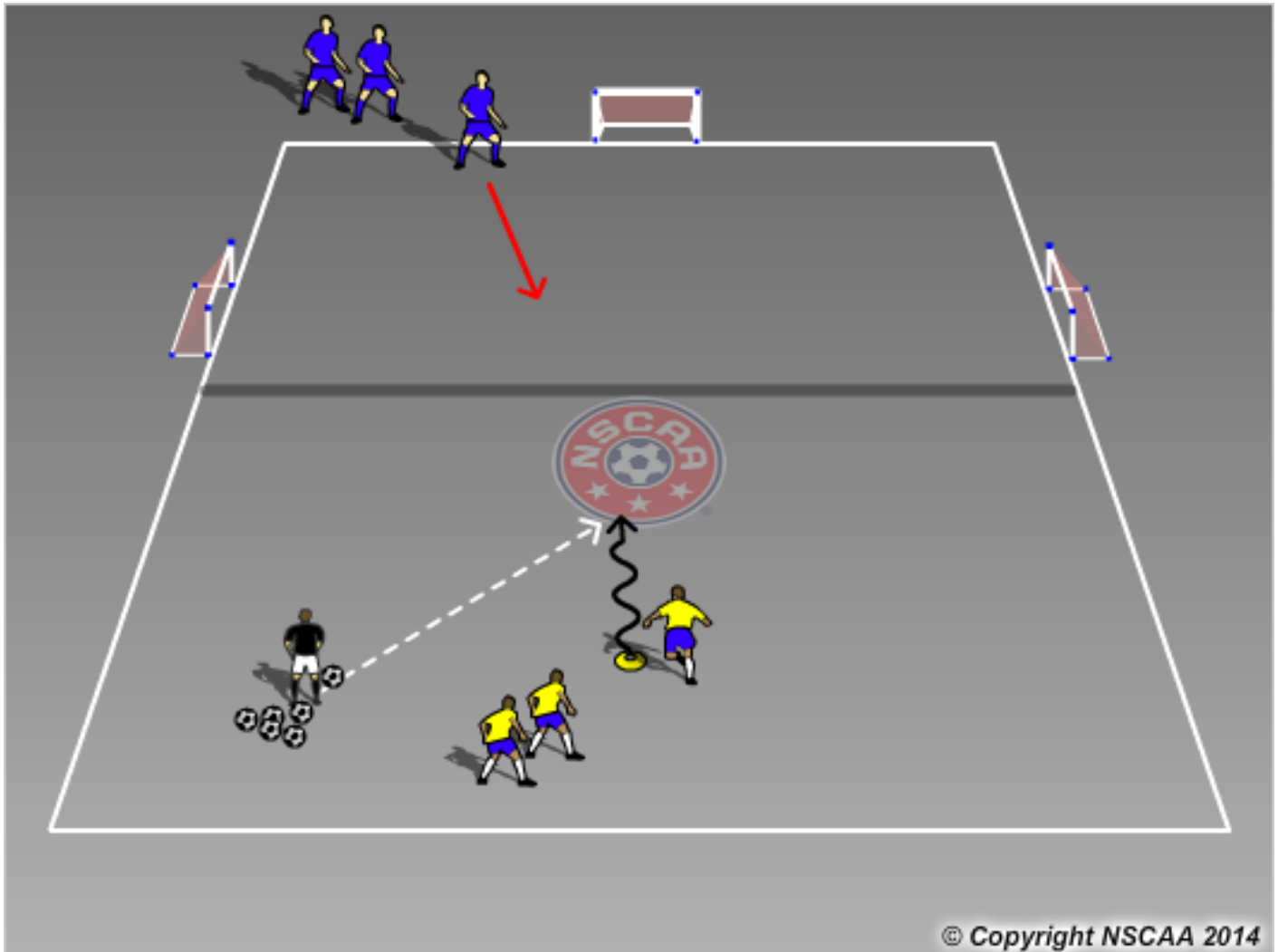
# 1v1 to Gates



Server plays the ball out to either player, who tries to carry the ball through either of the two 'gates'. The opposing player attempts to get the ball back to the server.

This activity allows coaches to stop and teach possession, decision-making and creativity.

# 1v1 Three Goal Game



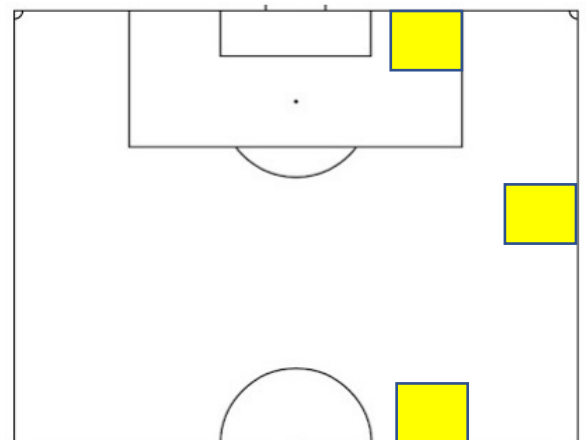
## 1v1 to 3 Goals

Serve the ball to an attacking player who must penetrate the final zone and score on any goal (gate or box).

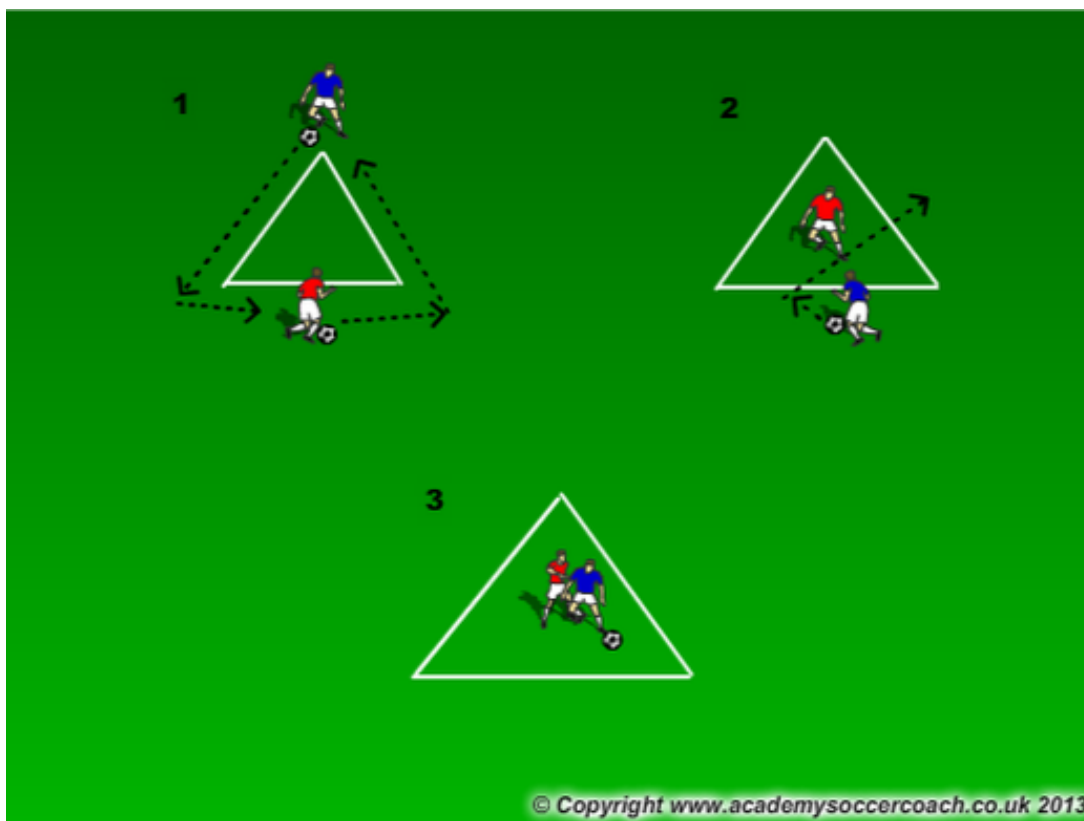
The defender must deny a score to win the ball back to the server.

Side goals (gate or box) have a lower value than the end line goal (gate or box).

*Diagram shows 'box' or 'cone' setup.*



# Dribbling with a Triangle



## Dribbling Tech/Skill

**1:** Players can not go into the triangle and must stay near the outside. One player is the chaser while the other is trying to get away. Swap over each time someone gets tagged. Both players have a ball.

**2:** One player is in the triangle without a ball while the other is on the outside with a ball. The player with the ball has to try and get through the triangle without getting tackled by the defender to score. If they get tackled then the players swap roles.

**3:** Both players are inside the triangle with one ball. The player at the end of the time limit with the ball wins. If a player kicks it out then the other player gets the ball.

### Key points:

- Change speed and direction to beat/trick the defender
- Use certain skills
- Small, quick touches on the ball
- Look for space/gaps
- Use body to keep the other player away from the ball (shielding technique: ball far side, body side on to see both player and ball, if the other player steps one way roll the ball the other etc)

# Defending Skill



## Defending Tech/Skill

1 v 1 to the cone. Attack has to try and pass the ball to hit/knock over the cone. Defender has to stop them and win the ball to become the attacker.

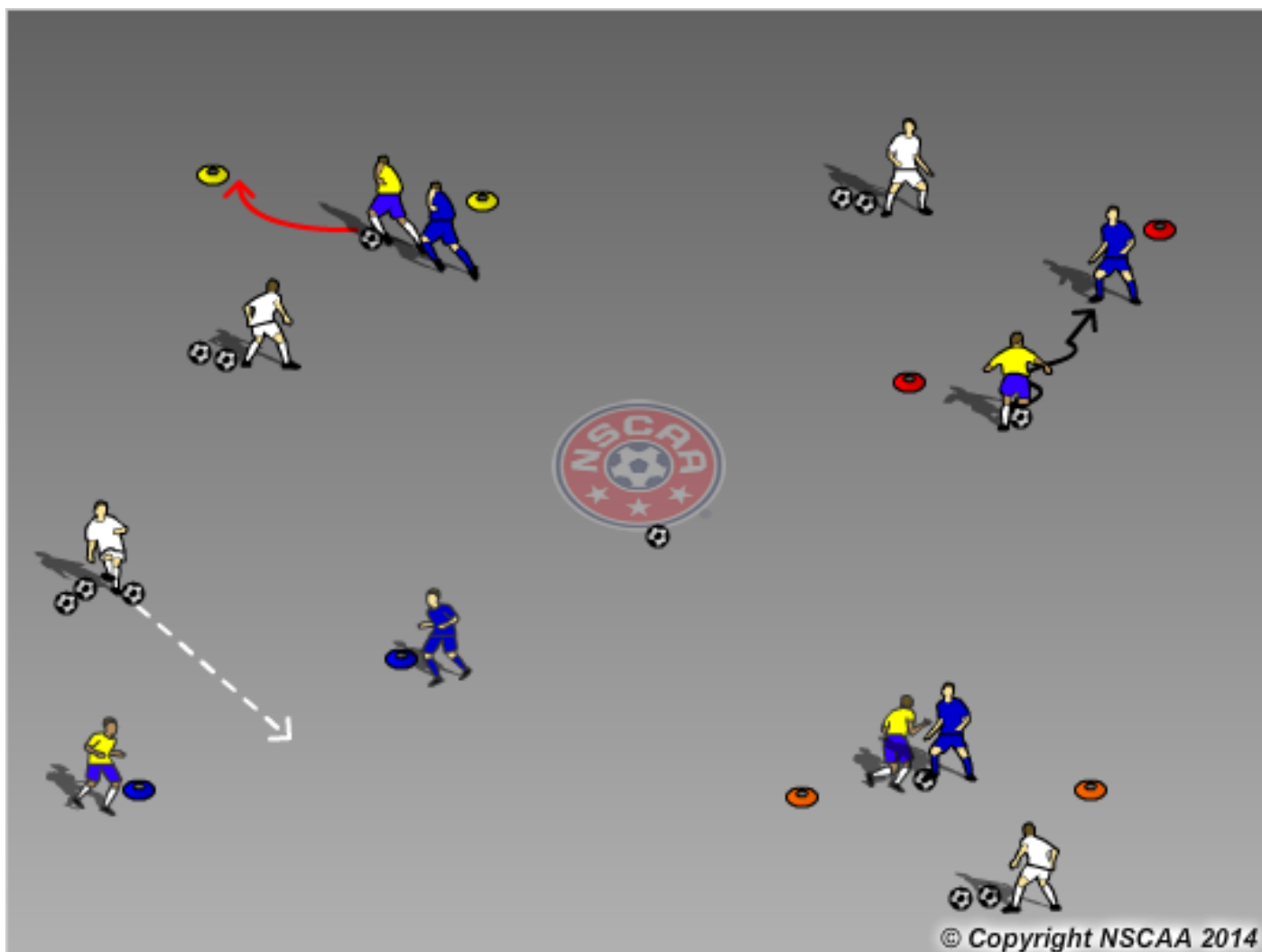
### Progressions:

- Can start with defender only defending and not trying to win the ball (taking it in turns to see which attacker can get the most points)
- 2 v 1 to cone

### Key points:

- Defending technique (jockeying)
- Tactical points (show towards weak foot etc)
- Slow down attacker
- Stop attacker turning if facing the other way

# 1v1 Return to Cone Activity

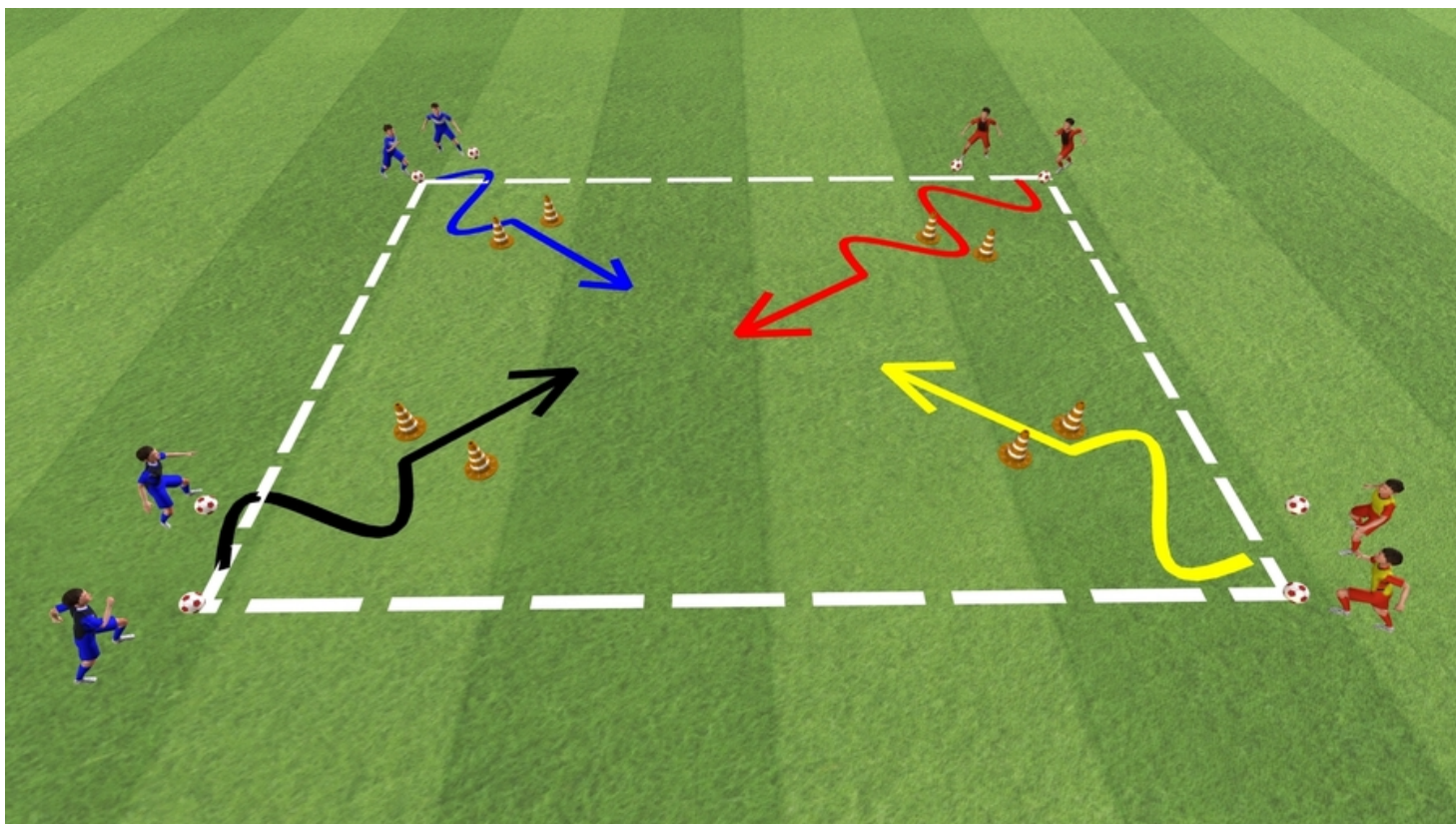


## 1 vs. 1 (Return the ball to your own cone)

Each player starts at a cone. The server plays the ball in and the two players compete to return the ball to their own cone. The server tracks the "battle" for 20-30 secs. Three games a set and then switch players.



# DIAGONAL DRIBBLE – Dribbling Game



Graphic: Thomas Staack

Training goal: In dribbling games, we encourage children to improve their dribbling technique in a playful way. Creative dribbling requires a lot of freedom and few targets.

## Construction

Set up an approx. 15 x 15 meter field with 4 small cone goals in the corners. Form rows with balls at the corners.

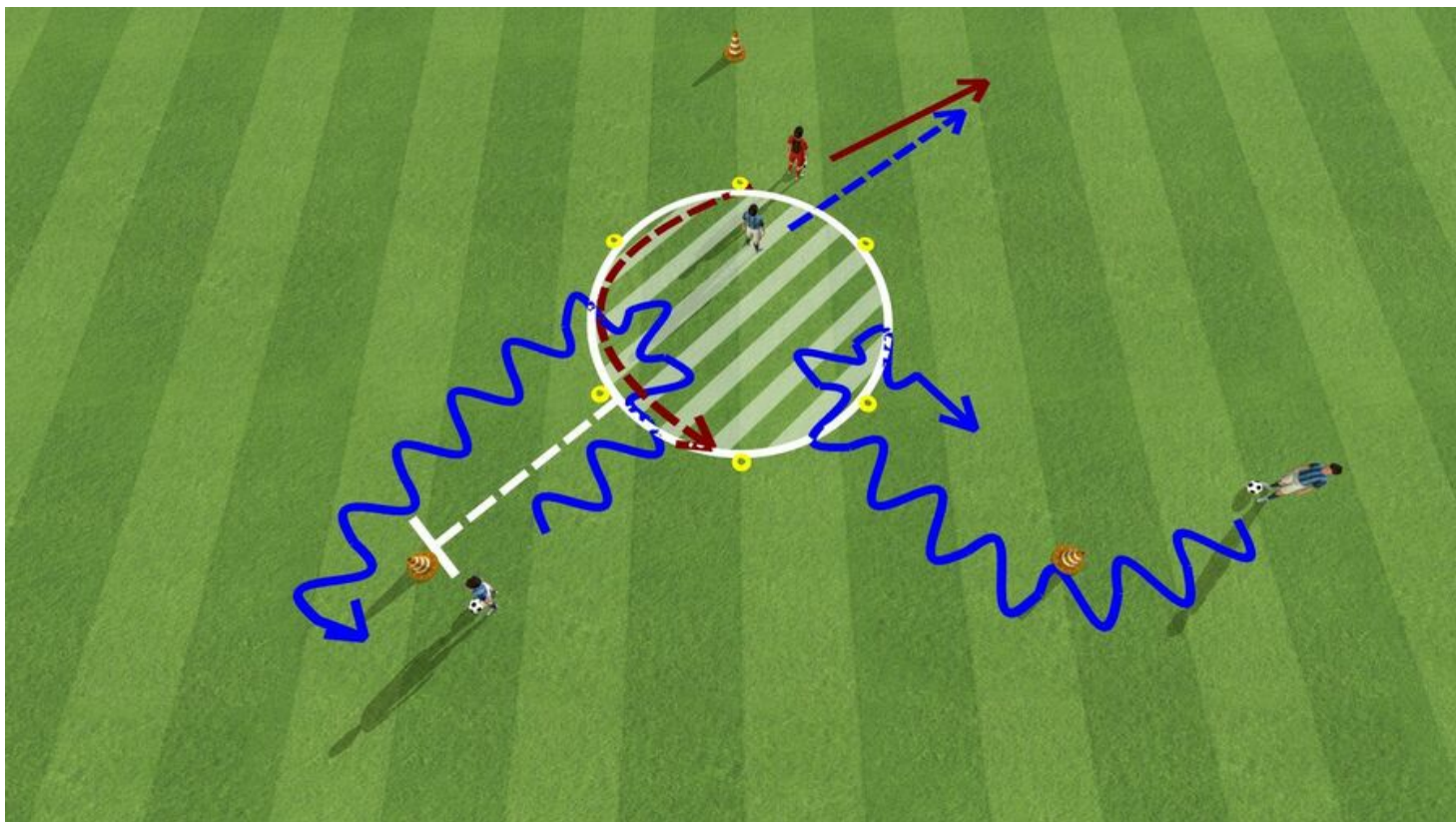
## Sequence

The first children dribble through the cone gate in their corner and then diagonally to the opposite corner. There they line up.

## Variants

- 1) Only dribble left/right.
- 2) Pass through the cone gate in front of the opposite corner.
- 3) Freely dribble through 2 cone goals.
- 4) Progression: Add additional 'gates' using cones.

# CROCODILE POND – Dribbling Game



Graphic: Markus Höber

by Markus Höber, coach at SV Nettelburg/ Allermöhe

## Structure

A circle (pond) with a diameter of approx. 4 meters and 3 starting cones at a distance of approximately 4 meters. 1 child (crocodile) stands in a circle, the other children with balls at the starting cones.

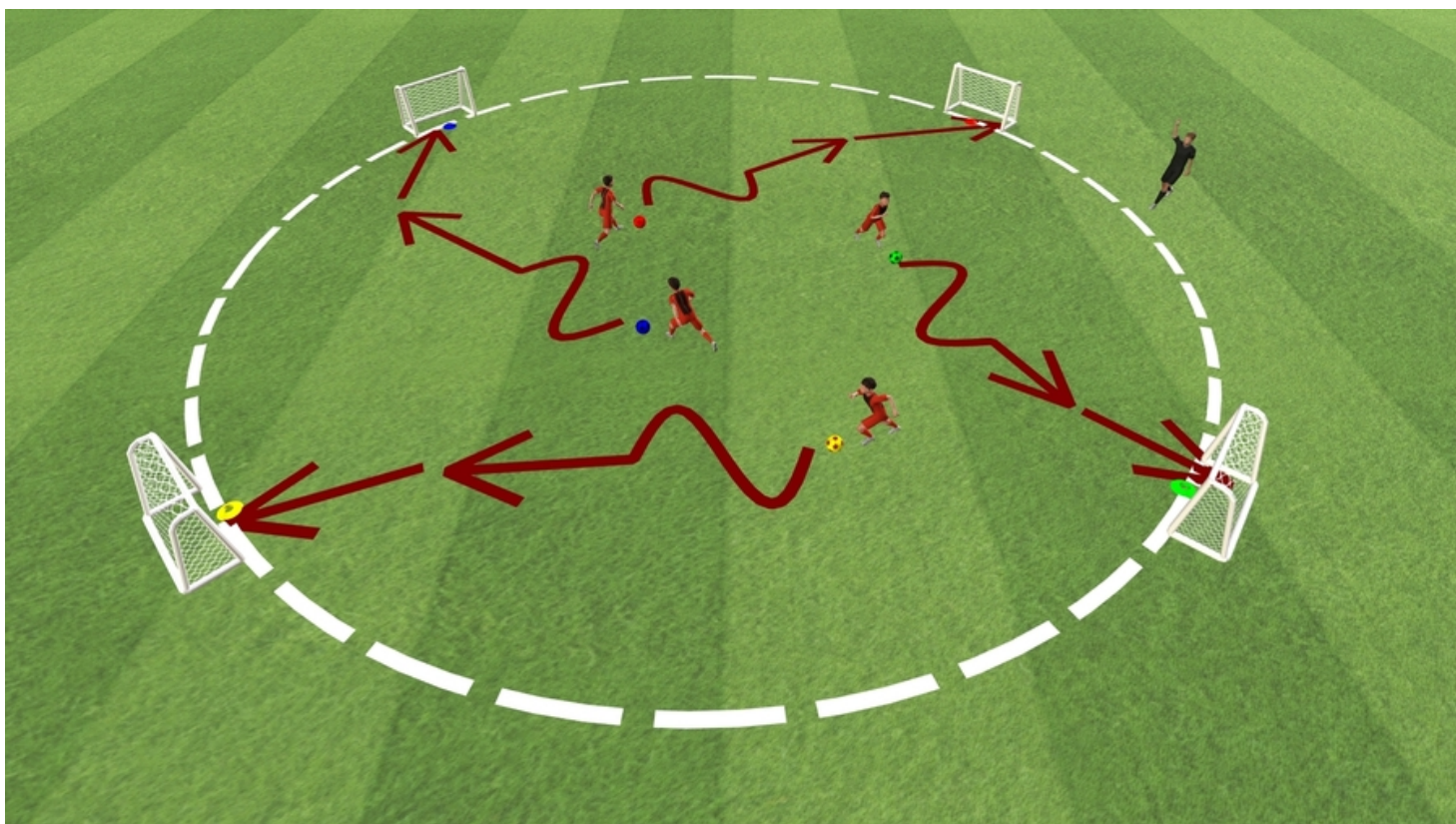
## Procedure

The children dribble one after the other in the circle and back to the starting cone. The crocodile moves in the field and briefly plays balls it has won out of the field.

## Variants

- 1) The children must stay in the circle for 3-5 seconds (count out loud).
- 2) The crocodile fits captured balls into mini goals.
- 3) If the ball is lost, the dribbler becomes the new crocodile, and the crocodile becomes the new dribbler.

# BALL EXCHANGE – Movement Game



Graphic: Thomas Staack

by Michael Bauder, junior coach at FC Wehr 1912 and base coach in the Hochrhein district

## Construction

Set up a circle with a diameter of approx. 15 meters and 4 mini goals (or boxes made with cones). Identify the mini goals with 4 different colors. Each child has a ball in one of the 4 colors. Alternatively mark the balls in color or hold colored objects in your hands.

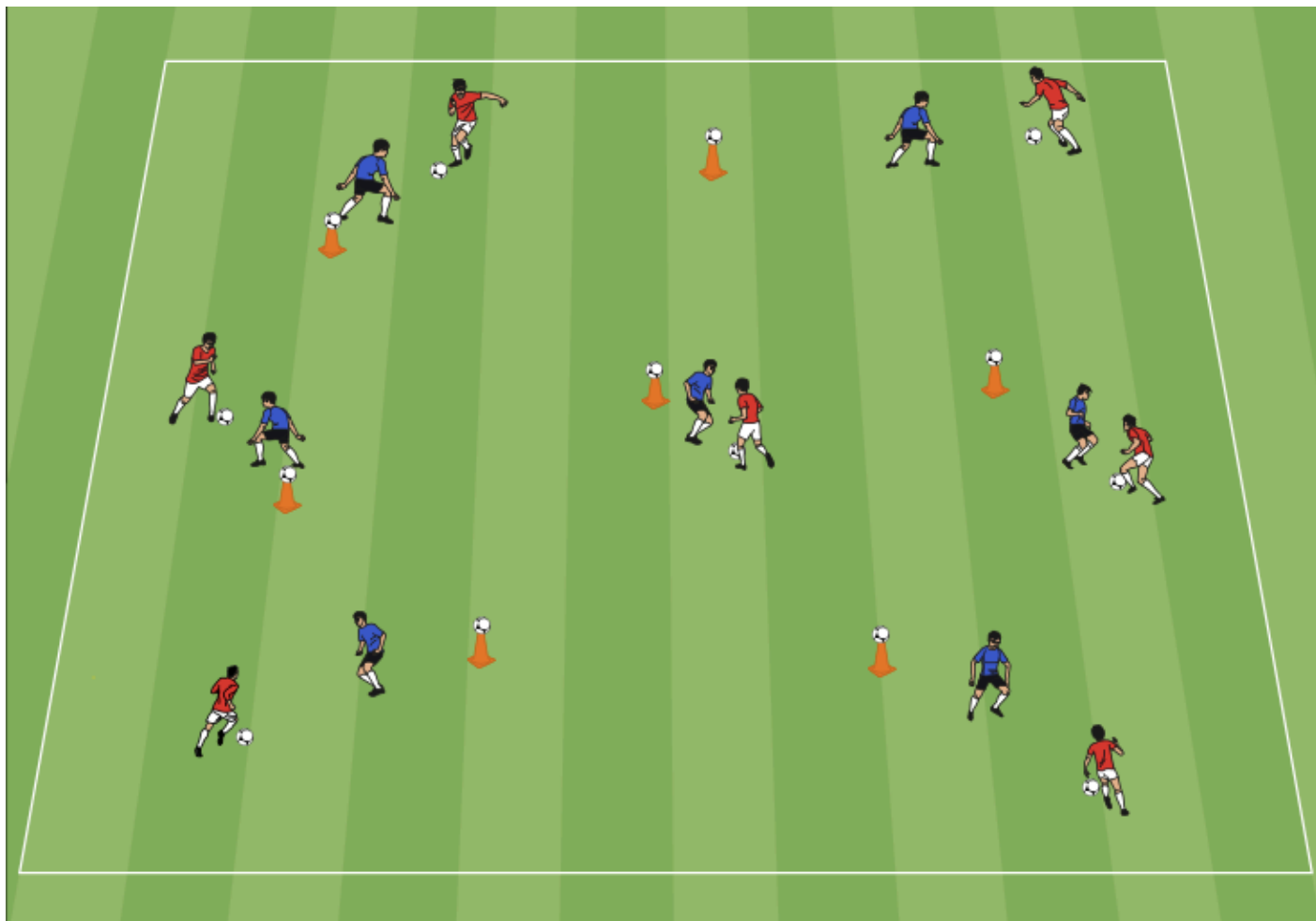
## Procedure

The children dribble in the field. When they meet, they swap balls. At the coach's command, they shoot into the goal that matches the color of the ball.

## Variants

- 1) The children hold colored cones in their hands, which they swap.
- 2) Scoring: Each exchange counts 1-point, each hit counts 5-points.
- 3) On an additional coach command, the children meet at the mini-goal of their color. The children of the first complete color group get 3 extra points.

# Protect the Cone



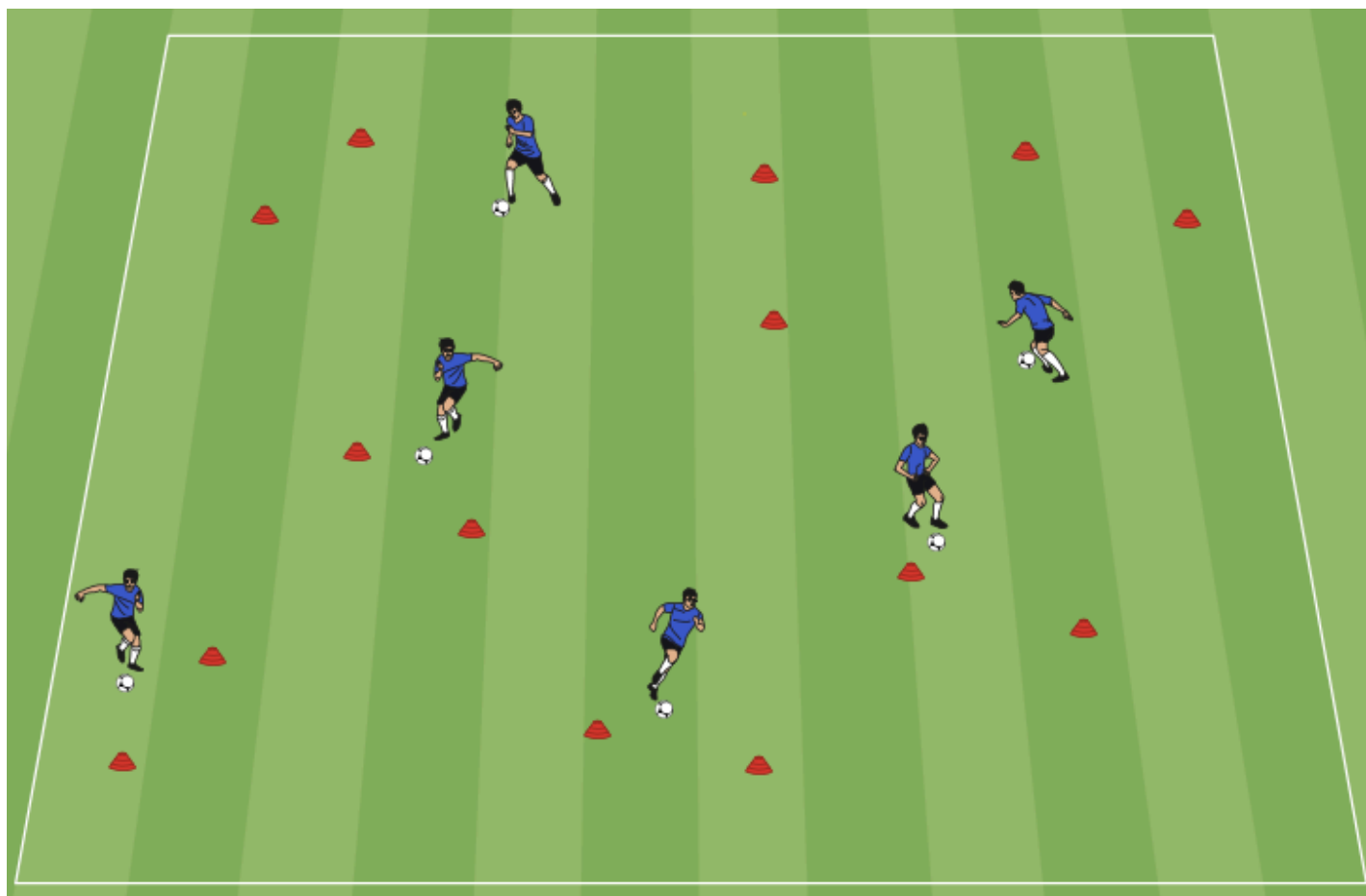
**'Protect the Cone'** is a fun 1v1 game where attackers try to knock the defender's soccer ball off of a cone.

**SET UP** - Have players partner up. Every player needs a soccer ball. One partner sets their soccer ball on top of a cone and is designated as the defender. The other partner sets their soccer ball on the ground and is designated as the attacker.

**HOW IT WORKS** - The attacker's objective is to knock the defenders ball off the cone. Play 20 second rounds. In the event that the defender can go a full 20 seconds without having their ball knocked off the cone, they earn a point. If the attacker knocks the ball off, they win the round.

**COACHING POINTS** - Defenders should position themselves between the attacker and the cone. In addition, the defender will need to be physical in order to protect the cone.

# Solo Scoring Spree



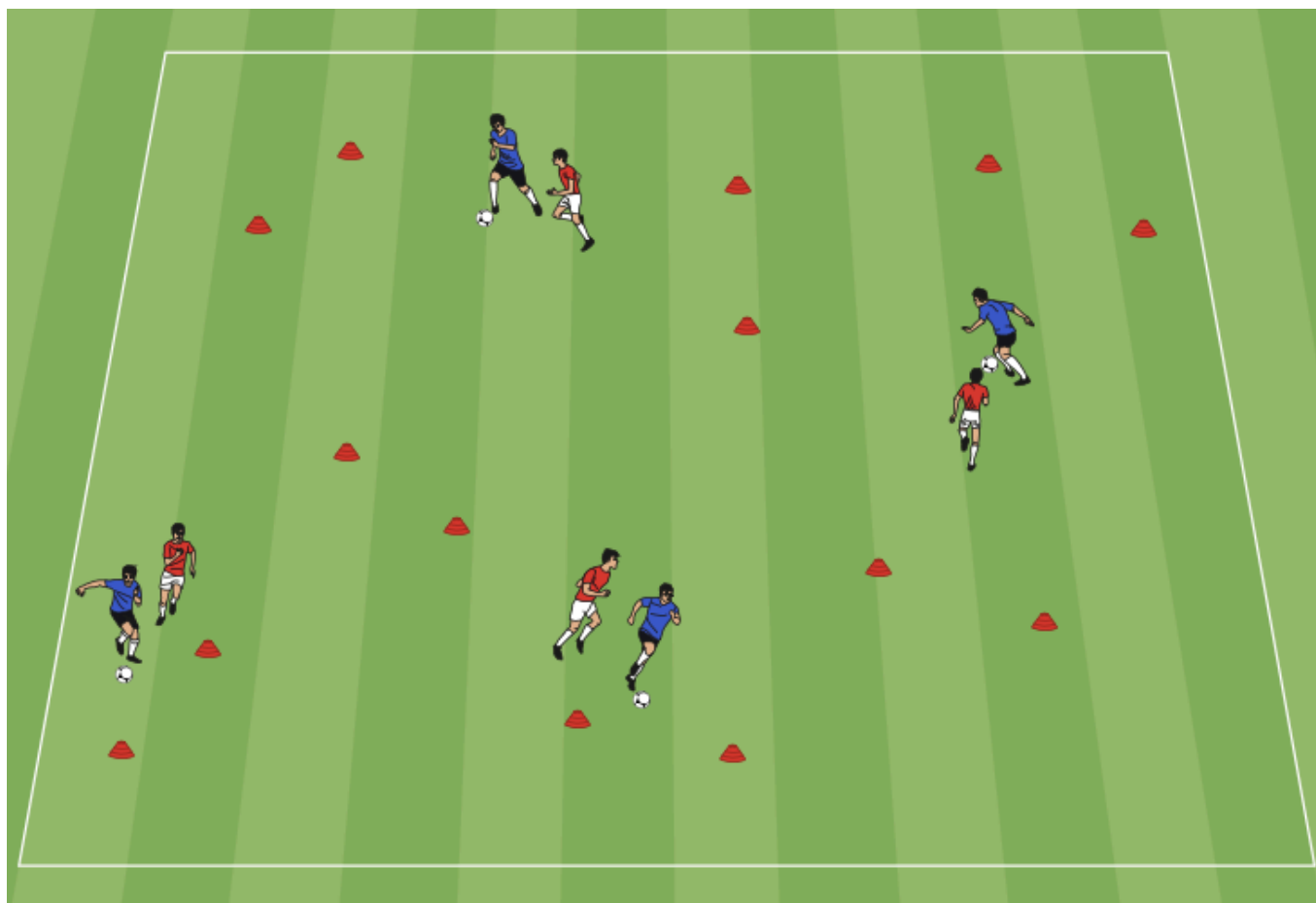
**Scoring Spree (Solo)** is a great game for players to practice dribbling quickly. It can also be used as a warm-up.

**SET UP** a rectangular grid with cone 'gates' set up throughout the field. All of the players will need soccer balls.

**HOW IT WORKS** - Give players one minute to dribble through as many gates as possible. At the end of one minute, the player who dribbled through the most gates wins. Dribblers may NOT dribble through the same gate twice in a row. This game can be progressed by having players use their weak foot only or by adding defenders.

**COACHING POINTS** - Dribblers should keep the soccer balls close to their body and navigate the field looking for open spaces. Dribblers benefit from keeping their heads up so they can see the gates. Make sure dribblers keep track of how many gates they go through.

# Scoring Spree



**Scoring Spree** is a great 1v1 drill to keep lots of players active at once. Compared to other 1v1 variations, this drill is exceptional for large teams because players do NOT have to wait in lines and they are constantly engaged.

**SET UP** - On a large field, set up cone 'gates' (sets of two cones that players can dribble through) and place them randomly throughout. Have players partner up. Each pair of players needs a soccer ball for this drill.

**HOW IT WORKS** - Players play 1v1 for one minute while attempting to dribble through as many cone gates as possible. When the round is over, the partner who dribbled through more cone gates wins. To make the game as fair as possible, I usually have players play rock, paper, scissors to see who gets to start with ball.

**COACHING POINTS** - Having possession of the ball is a huge advantage in this game because when one player has the ball, the other player can't score. With this in mind, players with the ball may benefit from shielding it from their opponent. This should be done while simultaneously trying to score goals. A good rule of thumb is that players should always keep their bodies between the ball and the defender.

In addition, we recommend that players keep their heads up while dribbling. This helps them not only see where their opponent is, but also where other players are on the field are. With large teams this is very important so that players can avoid collisions. When lots of players are doing this drill at once, it is best to use a large grid so that the space isn't too crowded.

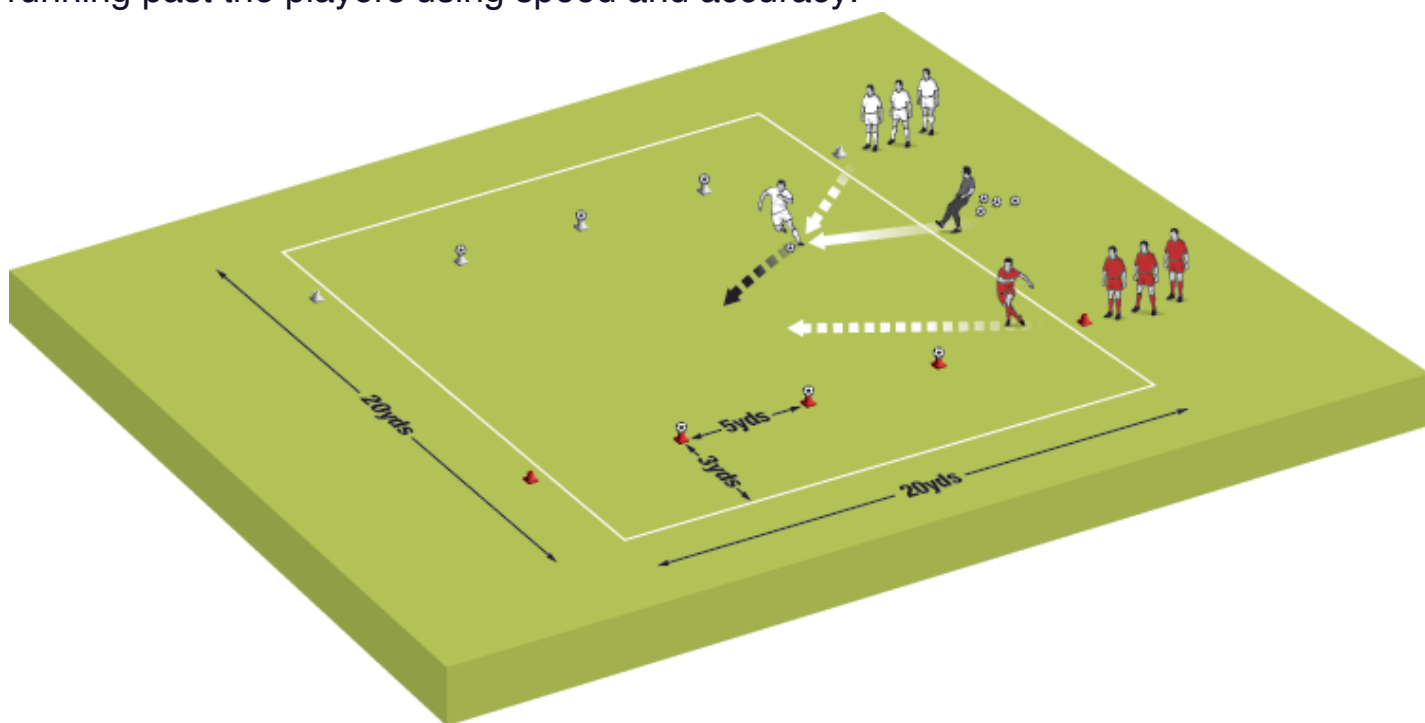
# THE ONE SHOW

Use this game and it will develop the ability of your players to use dribbling skills to win one-on-one situations. Individual skills develop players so they can keep the ball when facing an opponent. If they have the ability to get past their opponent, they have eliminated them from the game and will benefit from the space created.

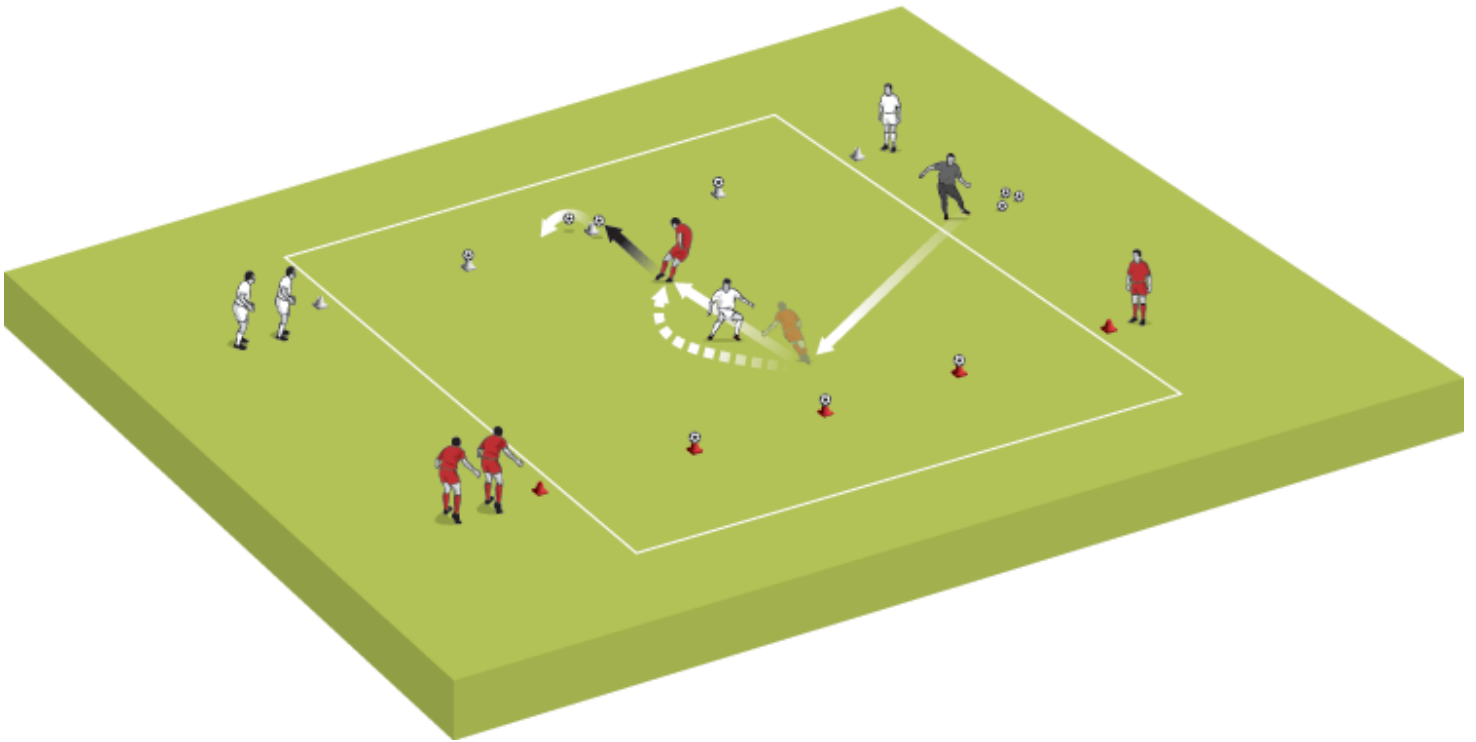
**Set up** - Set up a playing area of 20x20 yards. In this session we've used eight players in two teams of four. You will need balls, bibs and cones.

**How to play it** - Two teams of four players go 1v1 set up by the coach. Each team has three balls to defend and three balls to attack. The winning team is the first one to knock the balls off the cones. Once the ball goes dead, either by knocking a ball off the cone or going out of the area, a new pair starts. Alternate the team starting with the ball each time.

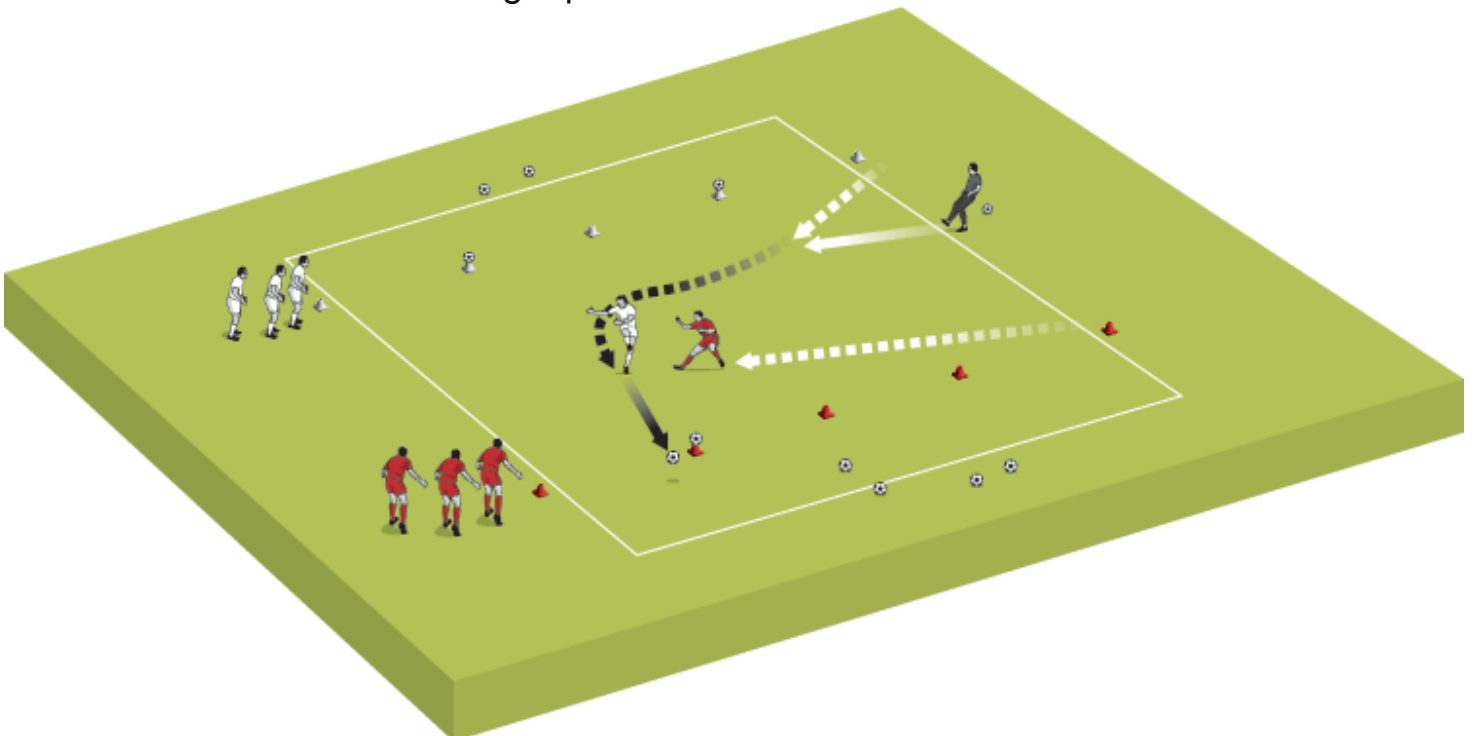
**Technique** - In this session players have to keep the ball and try to beat their opponent using speed, skill and accurate shooting. You want to see players trying different skills to get past their opponent, so look for innovation like knocking the ball into space and running past the players using speed and accuracy.



1. Teams line up at one side of the area and the players must go individually – one from each team try to knock their opponents balls off the cones
2. The coach starts each individual battle with a pass to one of the players – alternate the pass between the teams at each restart



3. When the players have had their turn, they go to the opposite end. They should start again from that end when all the players have had a turn
4. Here the player has knocked the ball to one side of his opponent and has run around the other side to get past him and score for his team



5. Here the player has dribbled the full length of the area to try and beat his opponent with speed – he misses but his team have won 2-1



# GO IT ALONE

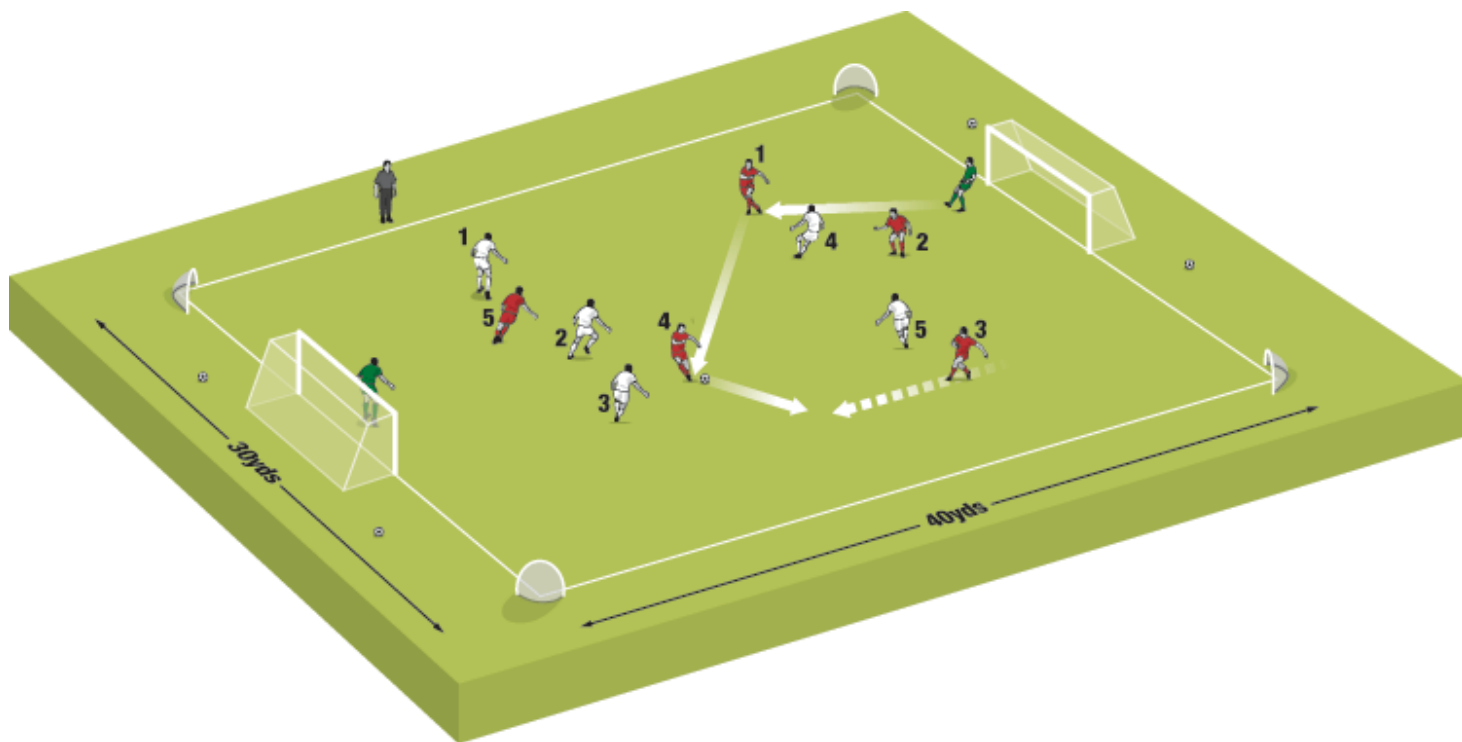
If you want your players to beat defenders with style, run this session. Getting young players to dribble and beat their opponent in 1v1 situations is vital to getting behind the opposition defence and creating goalscoring chances.

**Set up** - Set up an area of 40x30 yards. You need balls, bibs, cones and a normal goal plus four target goals on the corners of the area. You need to place two balls behind each goal. We've used 12 players.

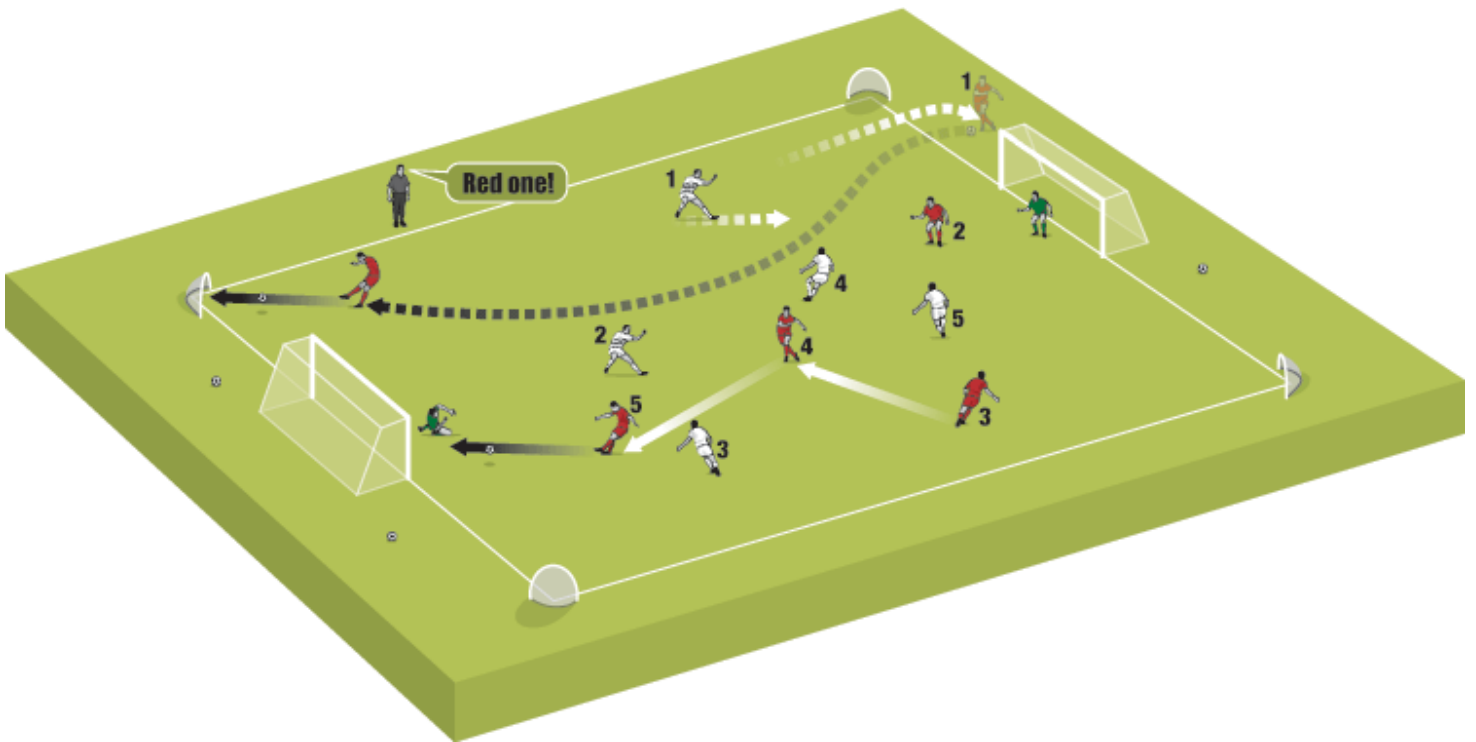
**How to play it** - Use two teams of six, including keepers. Number the outfield players in each team from one to five. Play a normal 5v5 game with this twist: the coach calls out the colour of one of the teams ("RED") then a number ("ONE") and the red number one runs to get a ball from behind one of the goals and attacks the corner goals at the opposite end of the pitch. His opposite 'number one' must defend against him. The rest carry on a normal 4v4 game.

If the defending number one wins the ball, he can attack the other corner goals. Once the ball is dead they rejoin the main game.

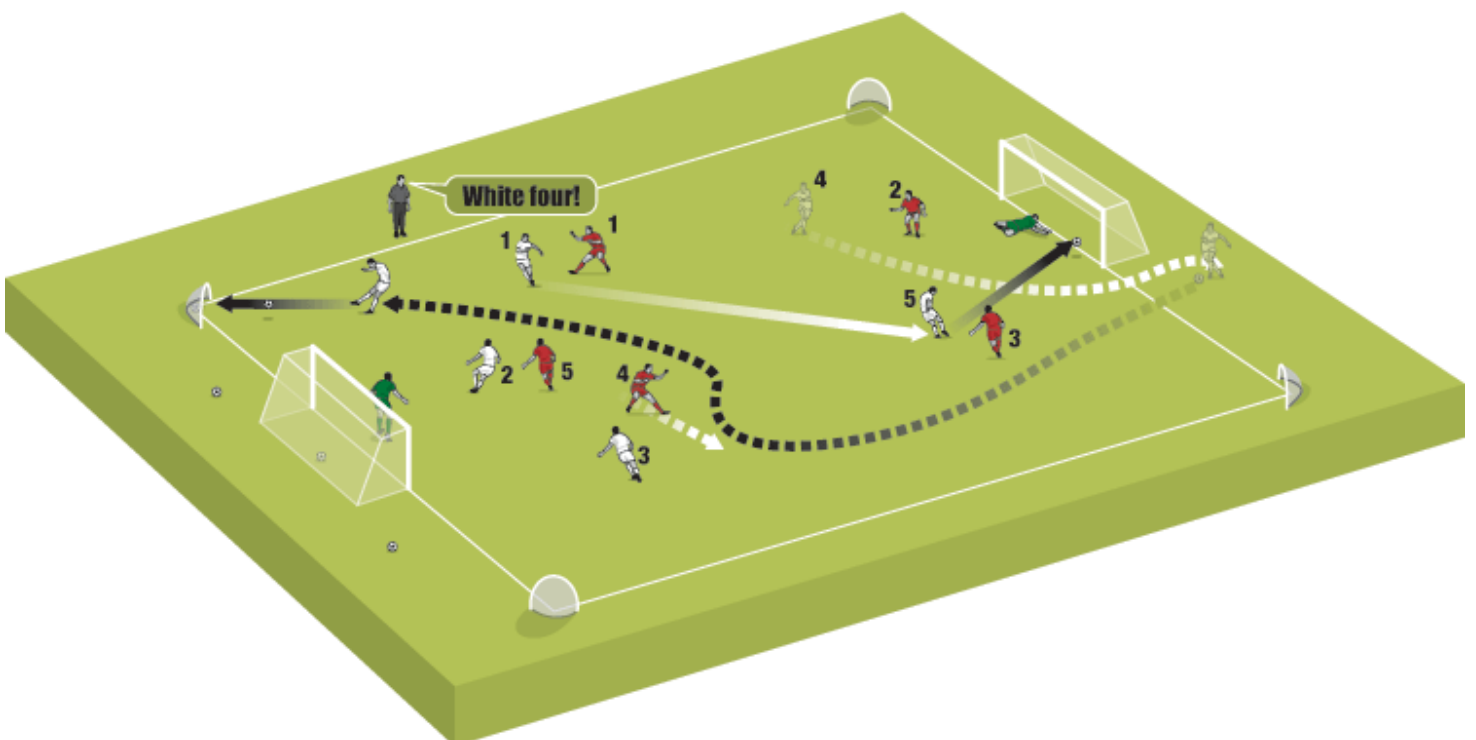
**Technique** - The nominated players are on their own in this 1v1 and must avoid the main game that is going on around them. Good for technique and for concentration.



1. Set up the pitch with six goals and two spare balls at each end. Outfield players should be numbered from one to five
2. Play a normal game and start the session with one of the goalkeepers passing out to his team

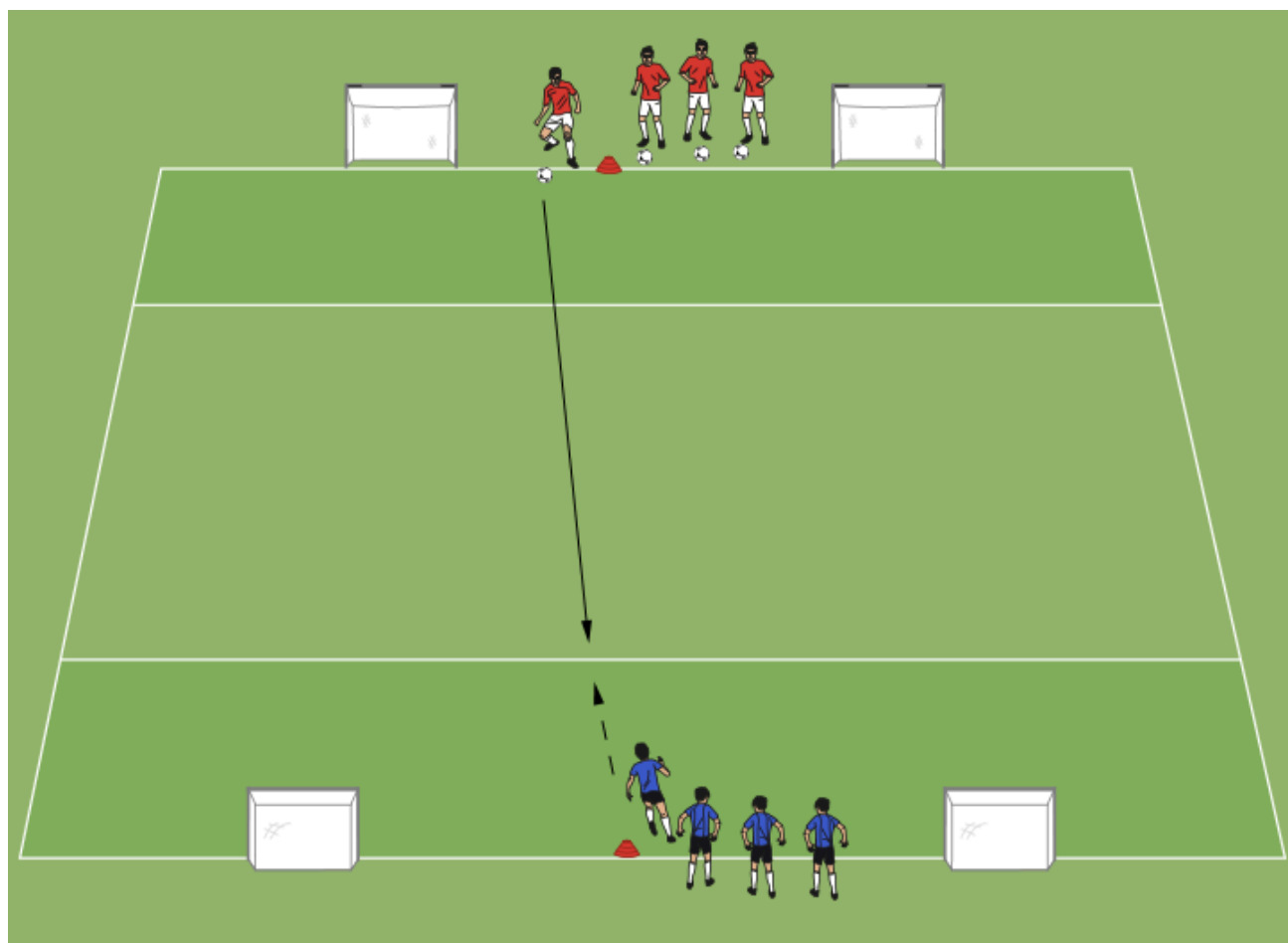


3. The coach calls out a team colour and a number. That player must go to get a ball from behind one of the goals and attack the corner goals opposite
4. The player with the same number from the opposition must go 1v1 against the player with the ball



5. The 1v1 goes on while the match is being played. Here the number four wins the 1v1 with a skill and scores while in the main game another goal is scored

# 1v1 to Mini 'Gates'



**1v1 to Mini Goals/ Gates** is a common variation of 1v1 that is easy to implement and simple for players to understand. It is a great go to 1v1 drill due to its simplicity. **At the youngest of ages (U5- U8), we highly recommend using cones as 'gates' to encourage dribbling through the gates.**

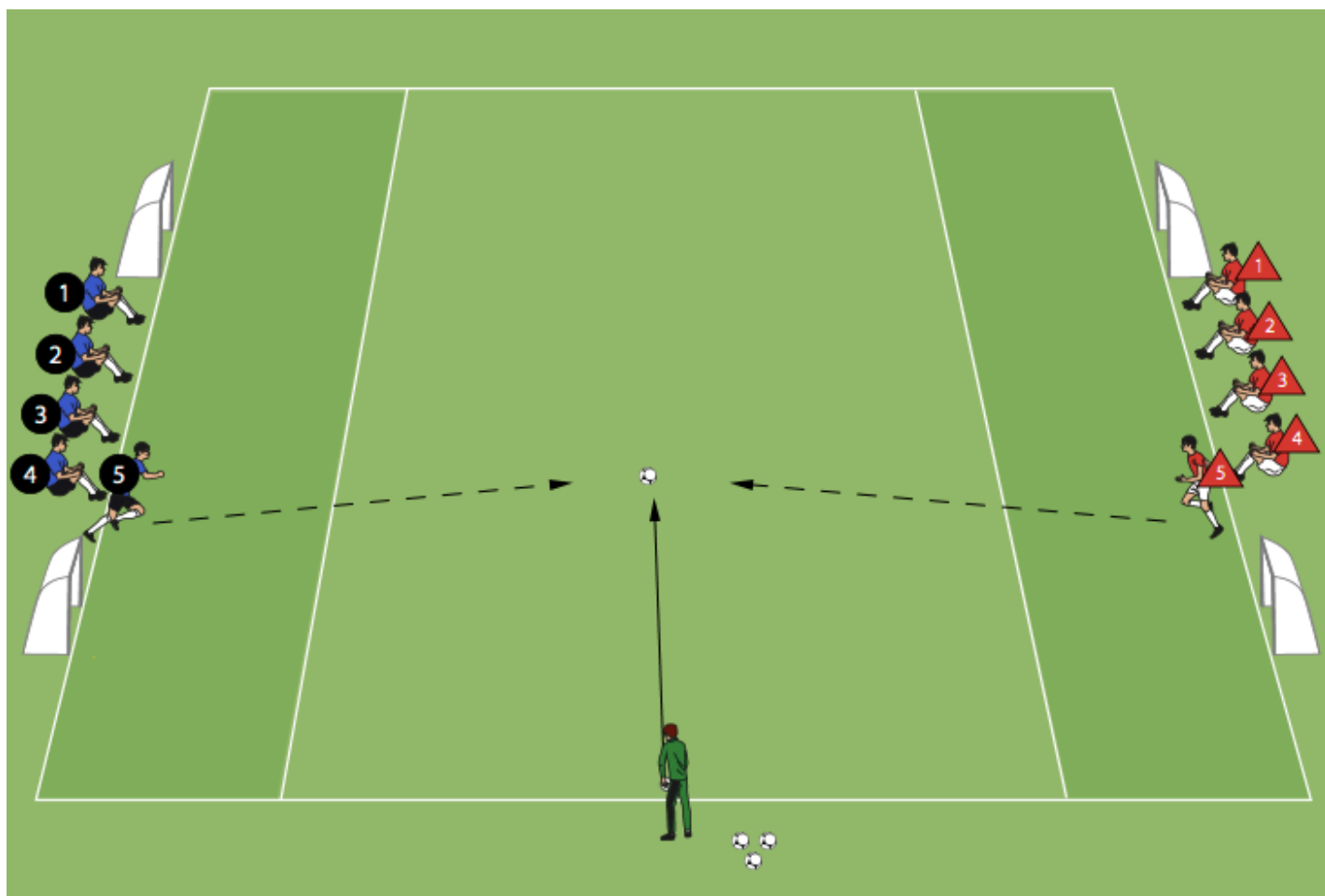
**SET UP** a field with two mini goals or 'gates' on each side. Divide players in half to create a line of players on each end line.

**HOW IT WORKS** - The players on one side always start with the ball. The game begins by the first player in line passing the ball to the first player on the other side. The players then play 1v1 to goal. Once someone scores or the ball goes out of play, the next two players in line begin. Have players switch lines after every dual. This ensures that both players have a chance to start on offense and defense.

**COACHING POINTS** - It is usually best for defenders to use a sideways on stance and force attackers to use their weak foot. By forcing the attackers one way, defenders can make the play predictable.

Because there are two goals on each side, attackers can fake as if they are going to go one way and then quickly dribble in the opposite direction. This drill is also a great chance for attackers to experiment with different moves to get past defenders.

# Call a Number



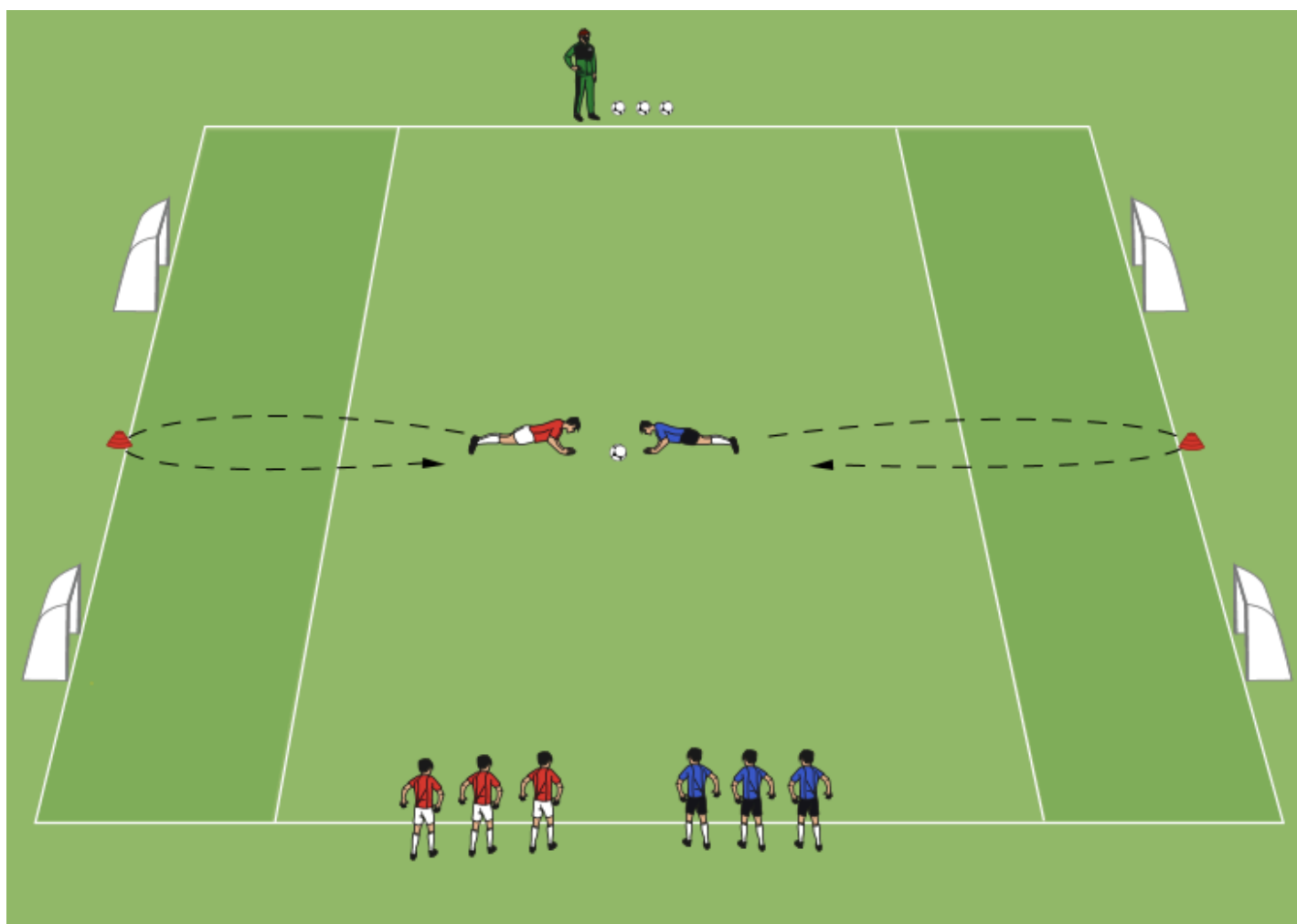
**Call a Number** is an excellent 1v1 game where players are numbered off and the coach calls out which numbers come out to play each round.

**SET UP** a field with two mini goals or 'gates' on either side. Create two teams and number players off on each team from one to however many players are on the team.

**HOW IT WORKS** - To start the game, the coach tosses a soccer ball out and calls which number is playing each round. For example, if the coach calls number two, the number two players from each team come out and play 1v1. Each time a player scores a goal, have them count it towards their team's total. The first team to five goals wins.

**COACHING POINTS** - Players need to pay attention to know when their number is called. Emphasize hustle and effort. For very large teams, this game can be adapted to 2v2 or 3v3 by calling out multiple numbers.

# Spring for the Advantage



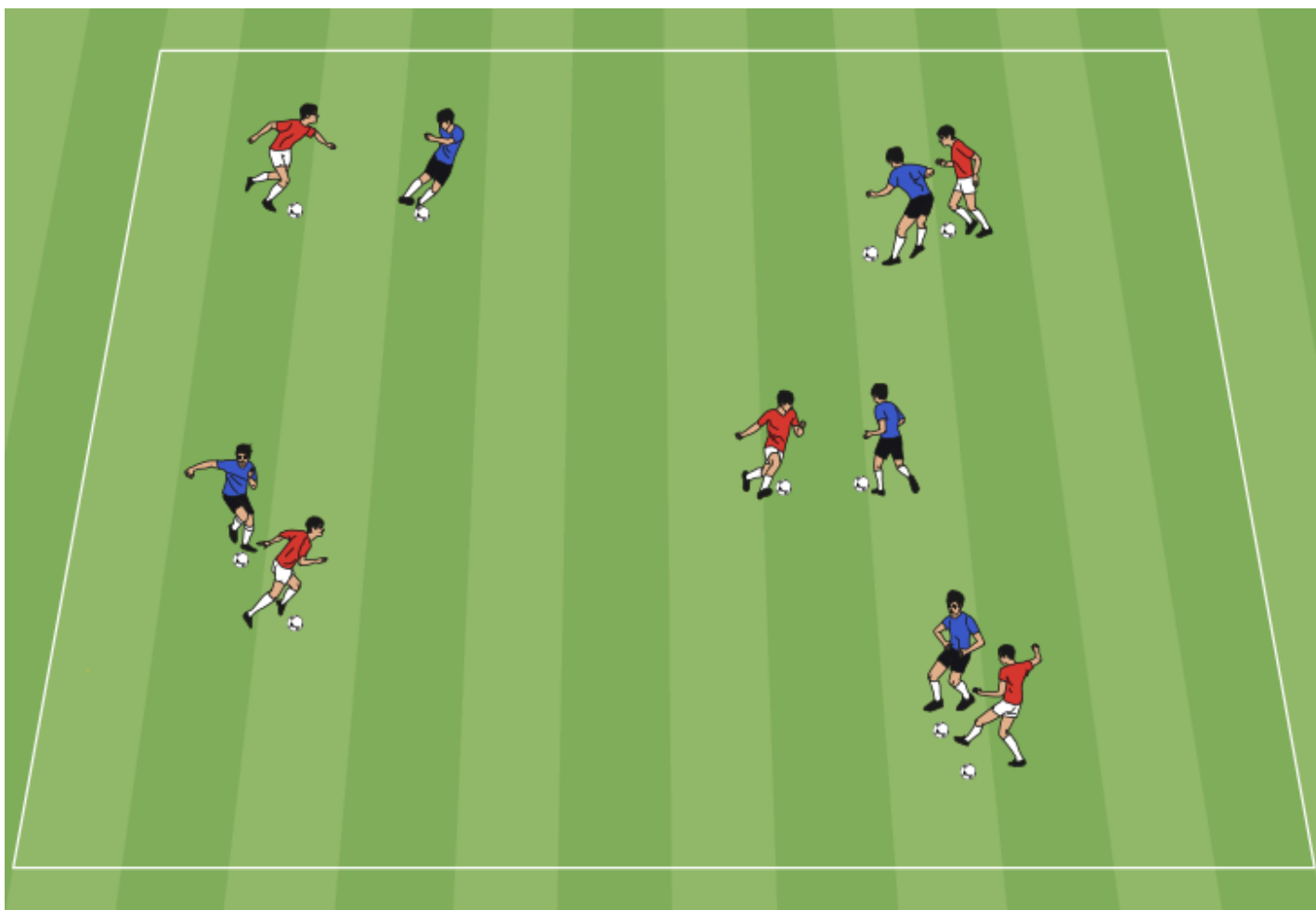
**Sprint for the Advantage** is a 1v1 drill where players must sprint around a cone on their own end line before coming out to play 1v1. Faster players have the advantage in this game because they are more likely to get to the ball first.

**SET UP** a field with two mini goals or gates and a cone on either side. Place a soccer ball in the middle of the field. Create two teams and have the first player of each team come out to the middle of the field. The players can start in different positions such as in a plank, sitting down, etc.

**HOW IT WORKS** - When the coach says 'go' the players must run around the cone on their own end line before coming out to play 1v1. Each round two new players come out.

**COACHING POINTS** -This game gives an advantage to faster players. Try to match players up based on speed for even duals. If there is a big speed difference a coach can adjust the ball position left or right to challenge the faster player.

# Chicken Fight



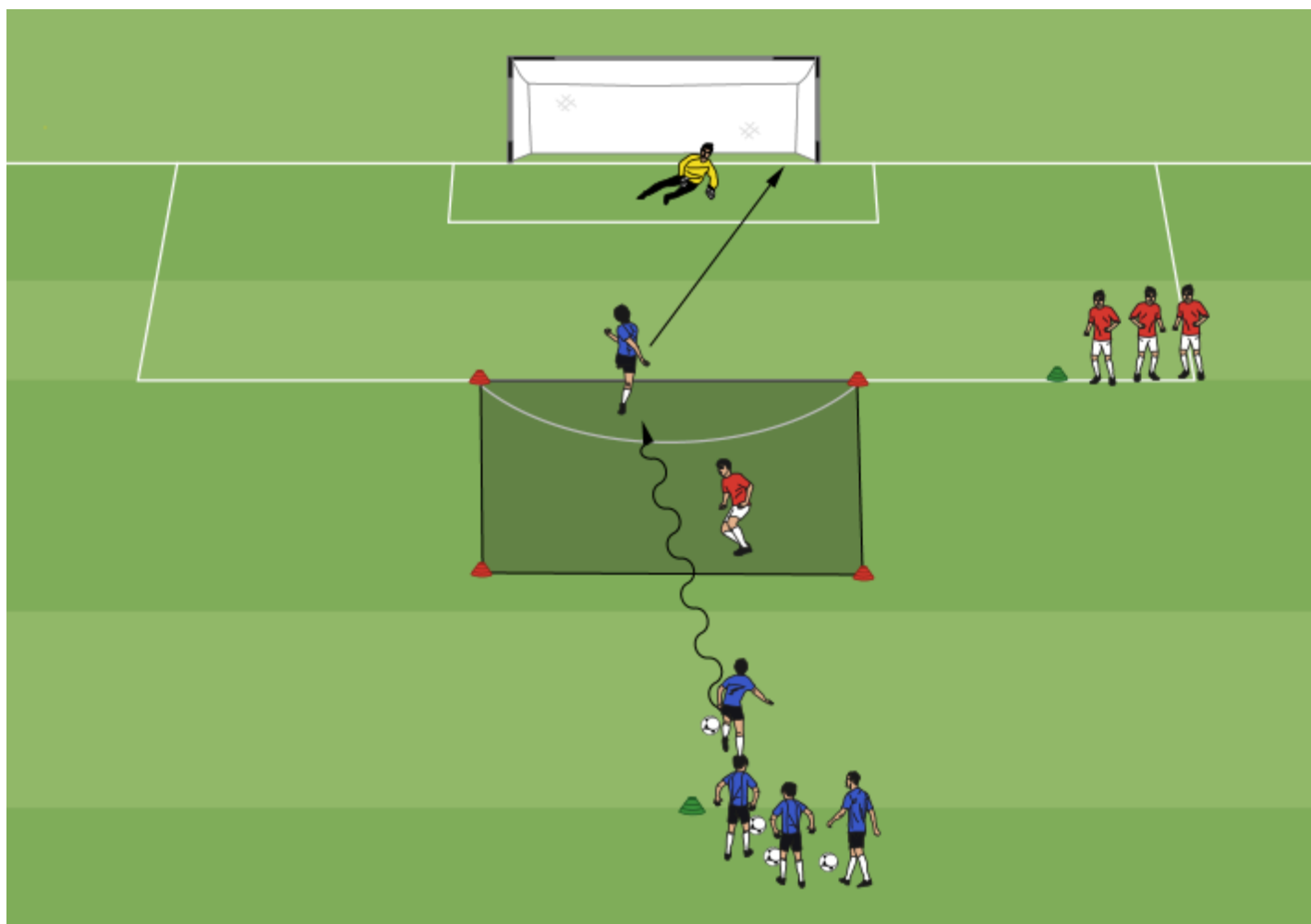
**Chicken Fight** is a 1v1 game where players have to protect their own ball while trying to knock their opponents ball out of bounds.

**SET UP** a grid and have players partner up. Every player needs a soccer ball.

**HOW IT WORKS** - The goal of the game is for players to knock their partners soccer ball out of the grid while maintaining possession of their own soccer ball. Play 30 second rounds. If neither player loses their soccer ball it is a tie.

**COACHING POINTS** -This works best in smaller grids so that it is easier for players to knock their opponent's soccer balls out. Players will need to shield their own ball while trying to swipe at their opponent's ball.

# Defender in the Square



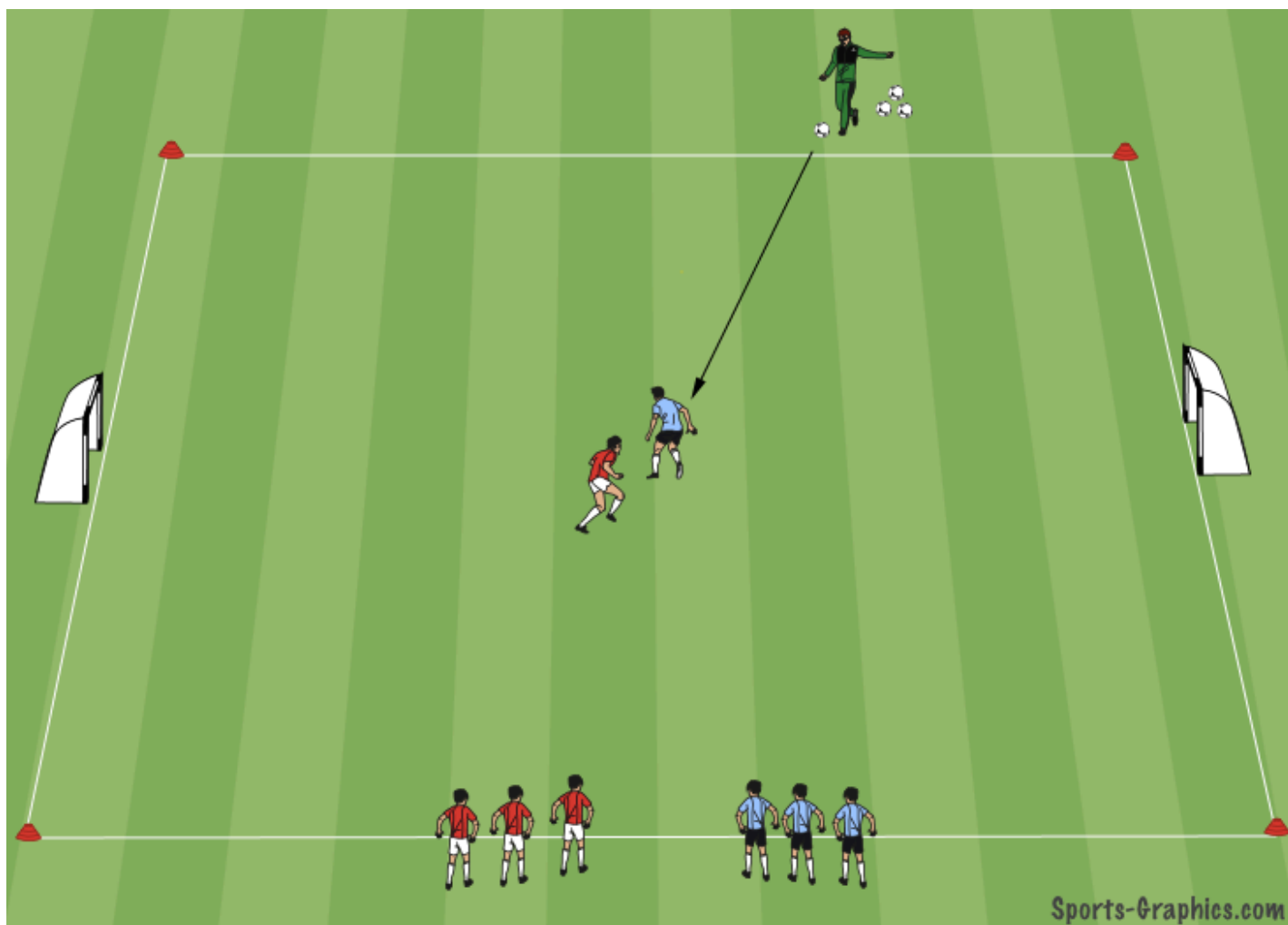
**Defender in the Square** is a variation of 1v1. In this drill defenders must stay inside a square at the top of the box as they try to take the soccer balls away from the attackers.

**SET UP** - At the top of the 18-yard box set up a 5x5-yard square. Separate players in half into defenders and attackers. **(While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/ parent be the GK for U5- U8 players).**

**HOW IT WORKS** - The first defender goes into the square and can only defend inside of it. The ball starts at the attacking line where the first attacker must dribble through the square before scoring. Players can switch lines every time or coaches can pit the defensive team against the attacking team and give each team 5 minutes to attack. The team with the most goals in 5 minutes wins.

**COACHING POINTS** - Defenders in the square must make their tackles inside of the square so they can't be afraid to get physical. Offensive players should go at full speed and throw in some attacking moves.

# 1v1 Attack in Either Direction



**1v1 Attack in Either Direction** is a simple 1v1 variation where attackers can score at either end of the playing field.

**SET UP** - Create a rectangular grid with a mini goal or 'gate' on either end. Divide players into two teams and have the first player from each team come out to the middle of the field.

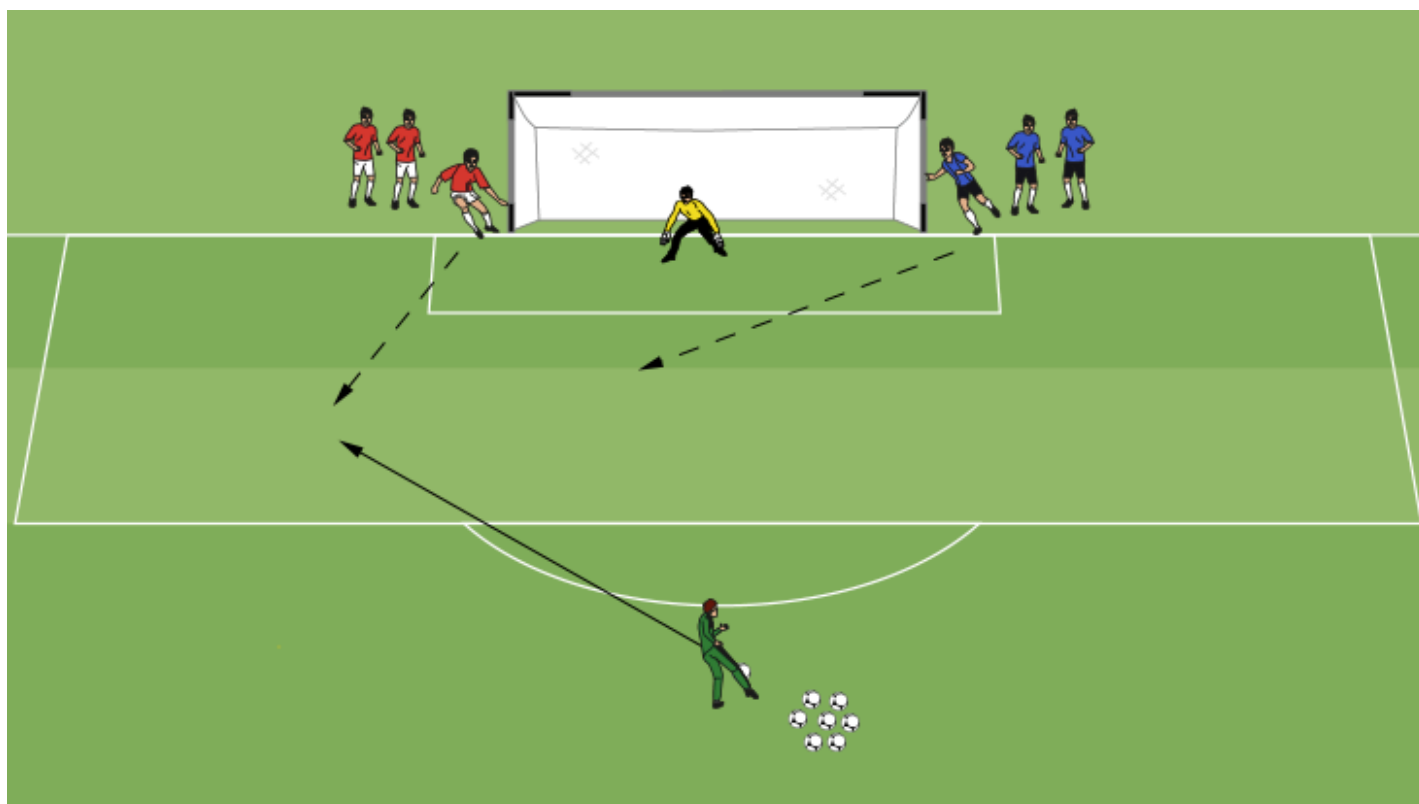
**HOW IT WORKS** - Once the two players in the middle are ready, play a 50-50 ball onto the field. When putting the ball in play, it is usually best if both players have a relatively even chance of winning the ball. This stimulates competition and helps develop ball winners. Whichever player gains possession of the ball can attack in either direction to try and score a goal. If the defending player wins the ball, they can also attack in either direction.

**COACHING POINTS** - This drill is a great opportunity for attackers to work on deceptiveness. For instance, an attacker may want to fake as if they are going to attack in one direction and then quickly turn and go the opposite way. With this in mind, the **Cruyff turn** can be an excellent move in situations like these.

Since players can score on either goal, the attacking player has a huge advantage in this game. For this reason, the real key to success is for players to win the first 50-50 ball.



# 1v1 Starting at the Posts



In **1v1 Starting at the Posts**, the coach starts with the soccer balls and players start with their hands touching the posts. The defender can't move until the attacker checks for the ball. *(While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/ parent be the GK for U5- U8 players).*

**SET UP** - Have players form lines at the posts. The coach starts with soccer balls at the top of the D.

**HOW IT WORKS-** One line is designated as the attacking line while the other line is designated as the defending line. Both players start with one hand on the post. The attacker can leave at any moment to check for a pass from the coach. The defender can't enter the field until the attacker's hand leaves the post. The attacker checks for the ball and tries to score while the defender closes down the space. If the defender wins the ball, they can earn a point by dribbling across the top of the 18-yard box with the ball.

**COACHING POINTS** - Checking players should call for the ball and communicate where they want the pass to be played. The defender should try to close the space quickly so that the attacker can't get a shot off.

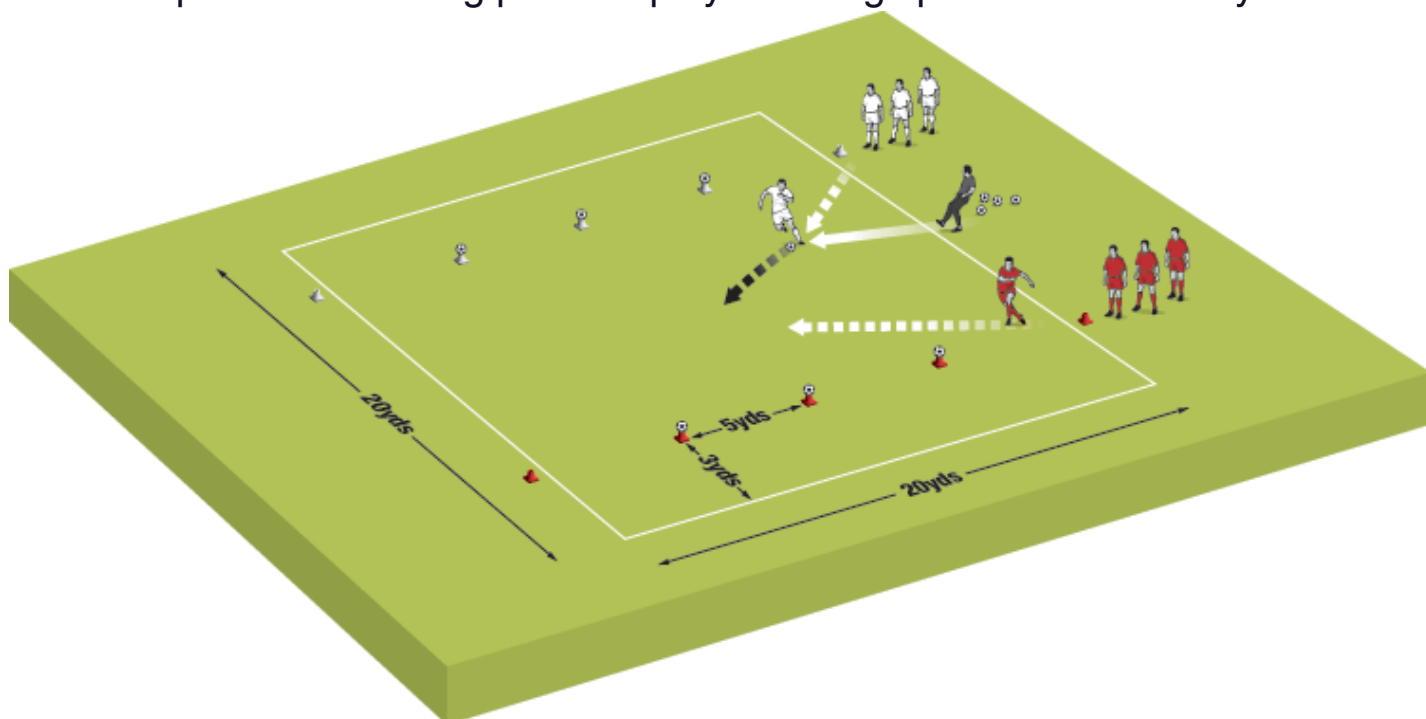
# The One Show

Use this game and it will develop the ability of your players to use dribbling skills to win one-on-one situations. Individual skills develop players so they can keep the ball when facing an opponent. If they have the ability to get past their opponent, they have eliminated them from the game and will benefit from the space created.

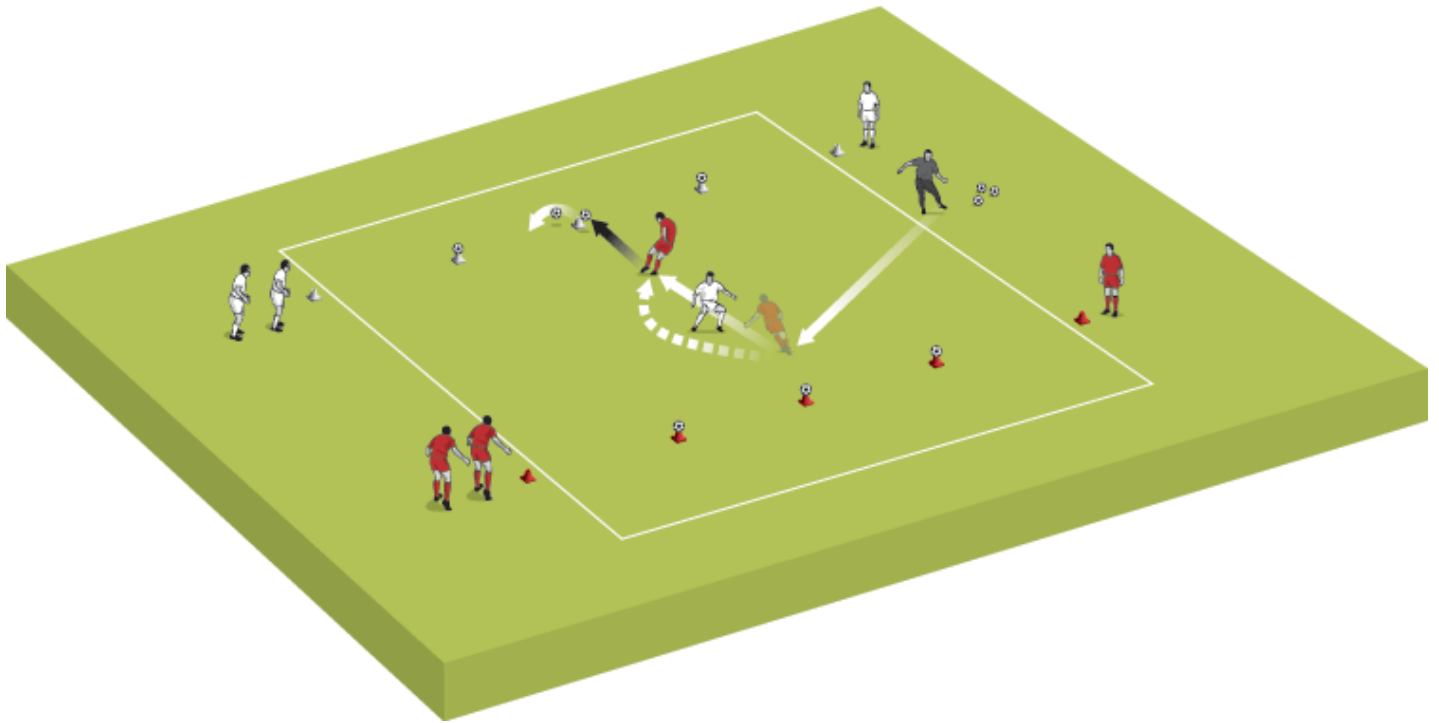
**SET UP** a playing area of 20x20 yards. In this session we've used eight players in two teams of four. You will need balls, bibs and cones.

**HOW TO PLAY IT** - Two teams of four players go 1v1 set up by the coach. Each team has three balls to defend and three balls to attack. The winning team is the first one to knock the balls off the cones. Once the ball goes dead, either by knocking a ball off the cone or going out of the area, a new pair starts. Alternate the team starting with the ball each time.

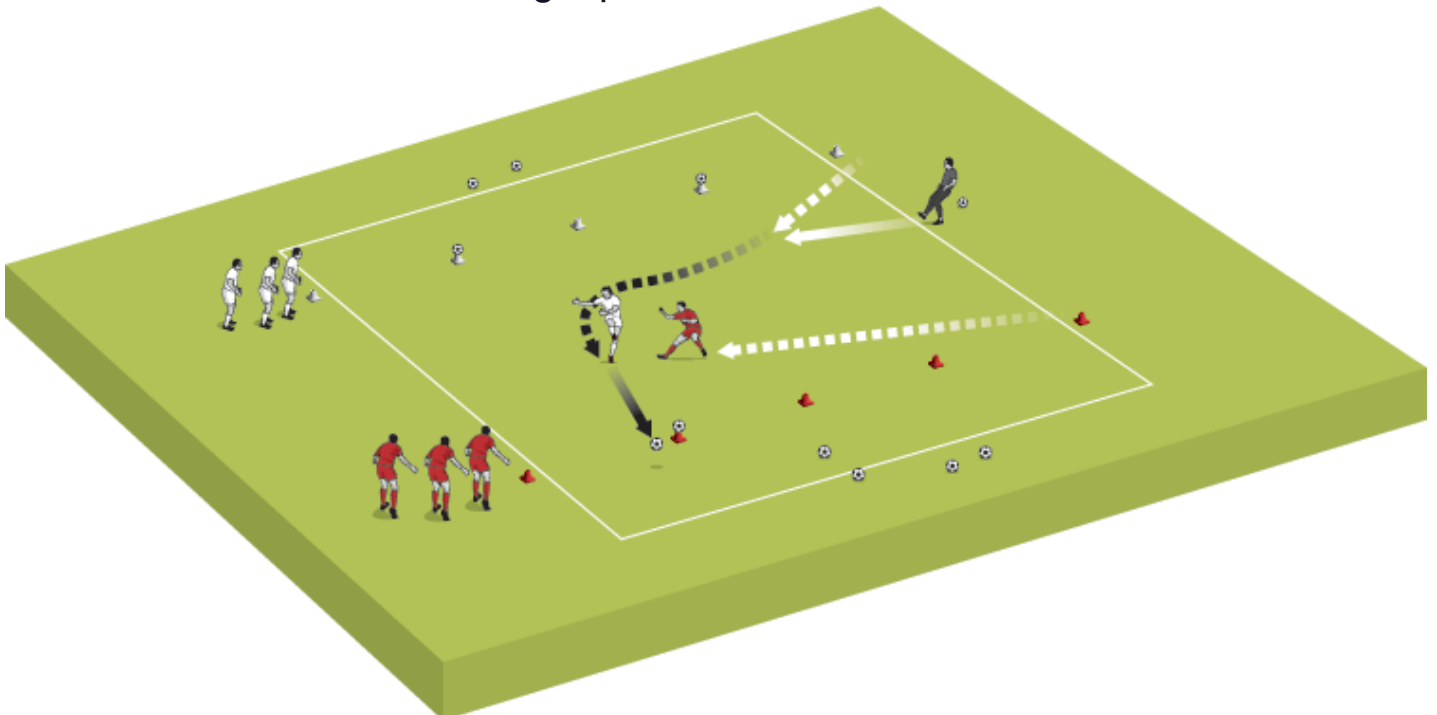
**TECHNIQUE** - In this session players have to keep the ball and try to beat their opponent using speed, skill and accurate shooting. You want to see players trying different skills to get past their opponent, so look for innovation like knocking the ball into space and running past the players using speed and accuracy.



1. Teams line up at one side of the area and the players must go individually – one from each team try to knock their opponents balls off the cones.
2. The coach starts each individual battle with a pass to one of the players – alternate the pass between the teams at each restart

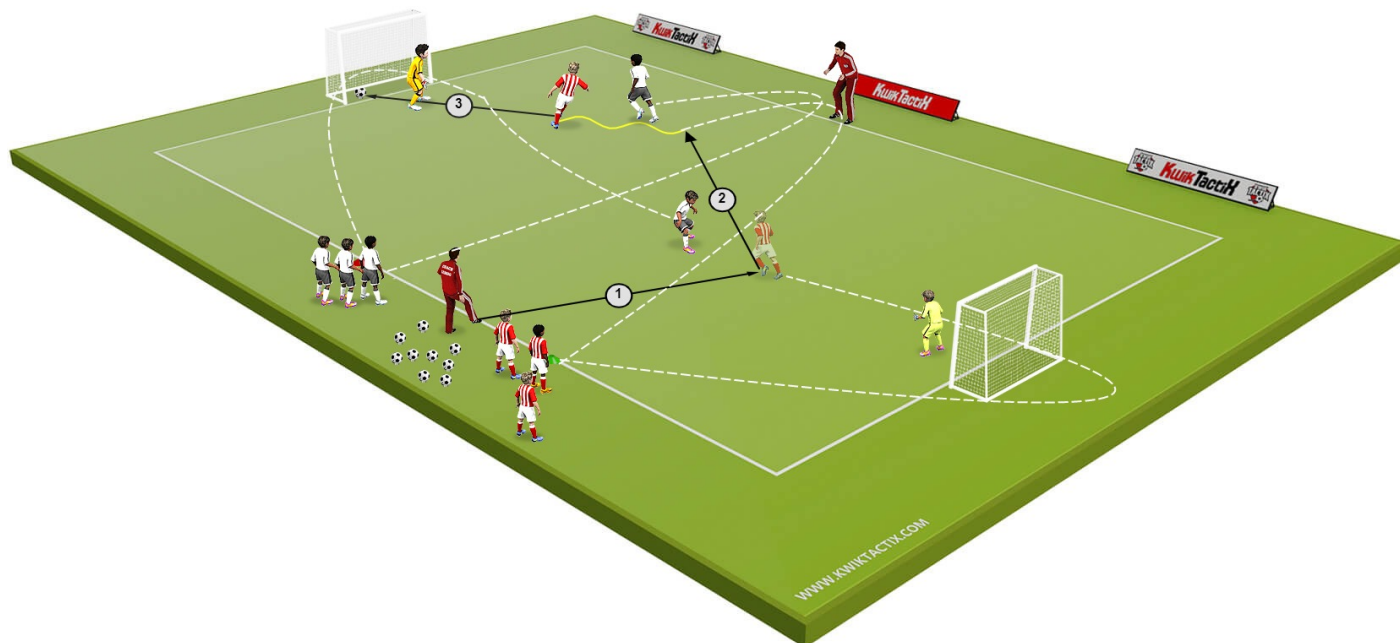


3. When the players have had their turn, they go to the opposite end. They should start again from that end when all the players have had a turn
4. Here the player has knocked the ball to one side of his opponent and has run around the other side to get past him and score for his team



5. Here the player has dribbled the full length of the area to try and beat his opponent with speed – he misses but his team have won 2-1.

# 1v1 on the Fly



This is a fast-paced and competitive activity ideal for all age groups. The set up provides plenty of repetition for 1v1 attacking and defending techniques and tactics. Match up equal ability competitors for a great experience for all players.

Create a 15x20 yard grid with two small goals or 'gates' - one on each end line. A coach with a large supply of balls, will start on one side of the grid with two teams starting behind a cone.

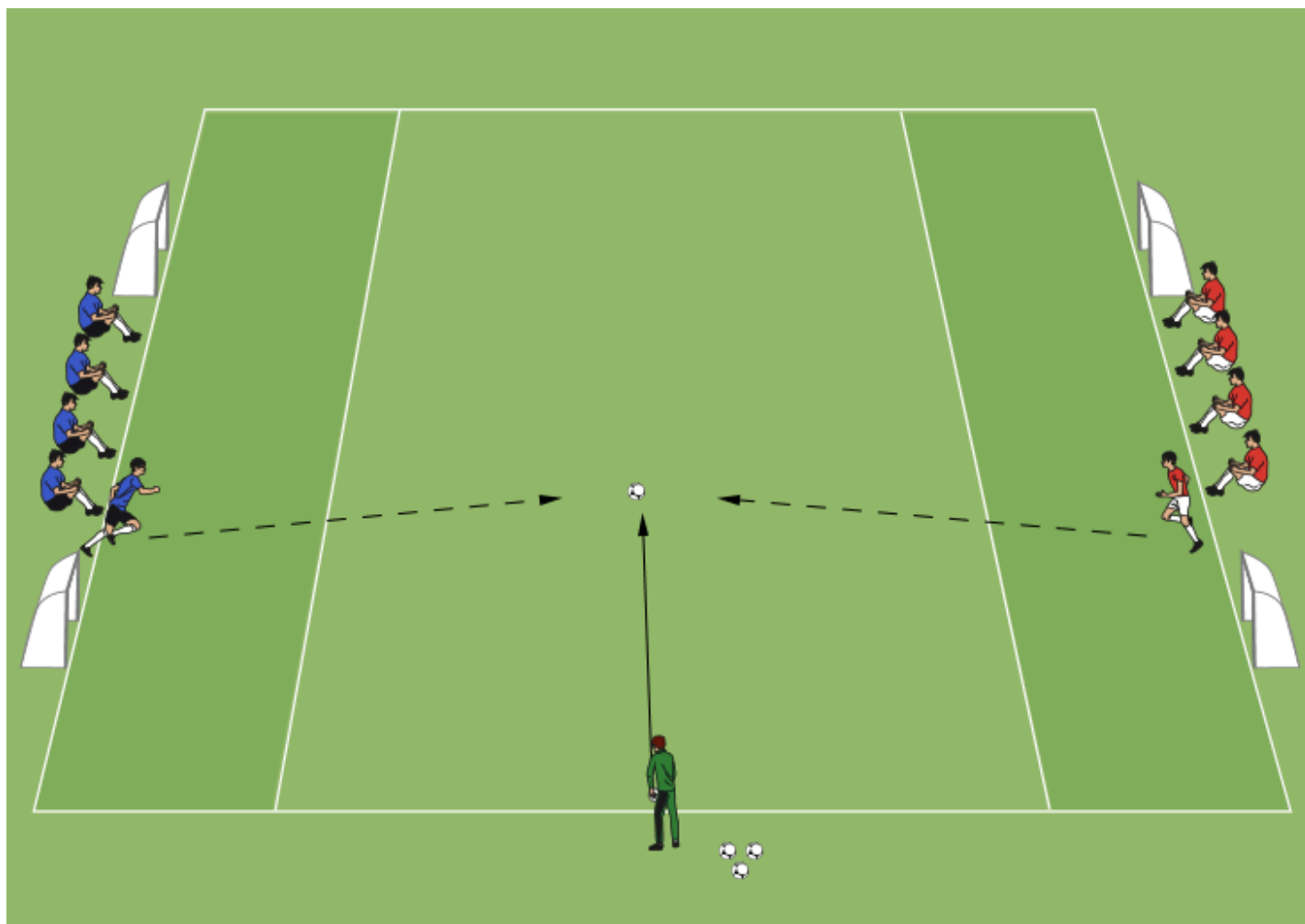
A second coach/ helper starts opposite the teams on the sideline.

Each team has 4- 5 players and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> sequence, a goalkeeper is added.

The activity can be progressed quickly from a less challenging 1v1 activity to a team game with keepers.

In the first sequence the players line up behind the cone and the coach shouts 'GO' and the first player in each line sprints to the coach opposite performs a 'high-five', turns, and then competes for the ball.

# 50-50



**50-50** is a simple 1v1 game where players start on their own end line and run onto the field to play 1v1 against their opponent, battling for the ball in the middle.

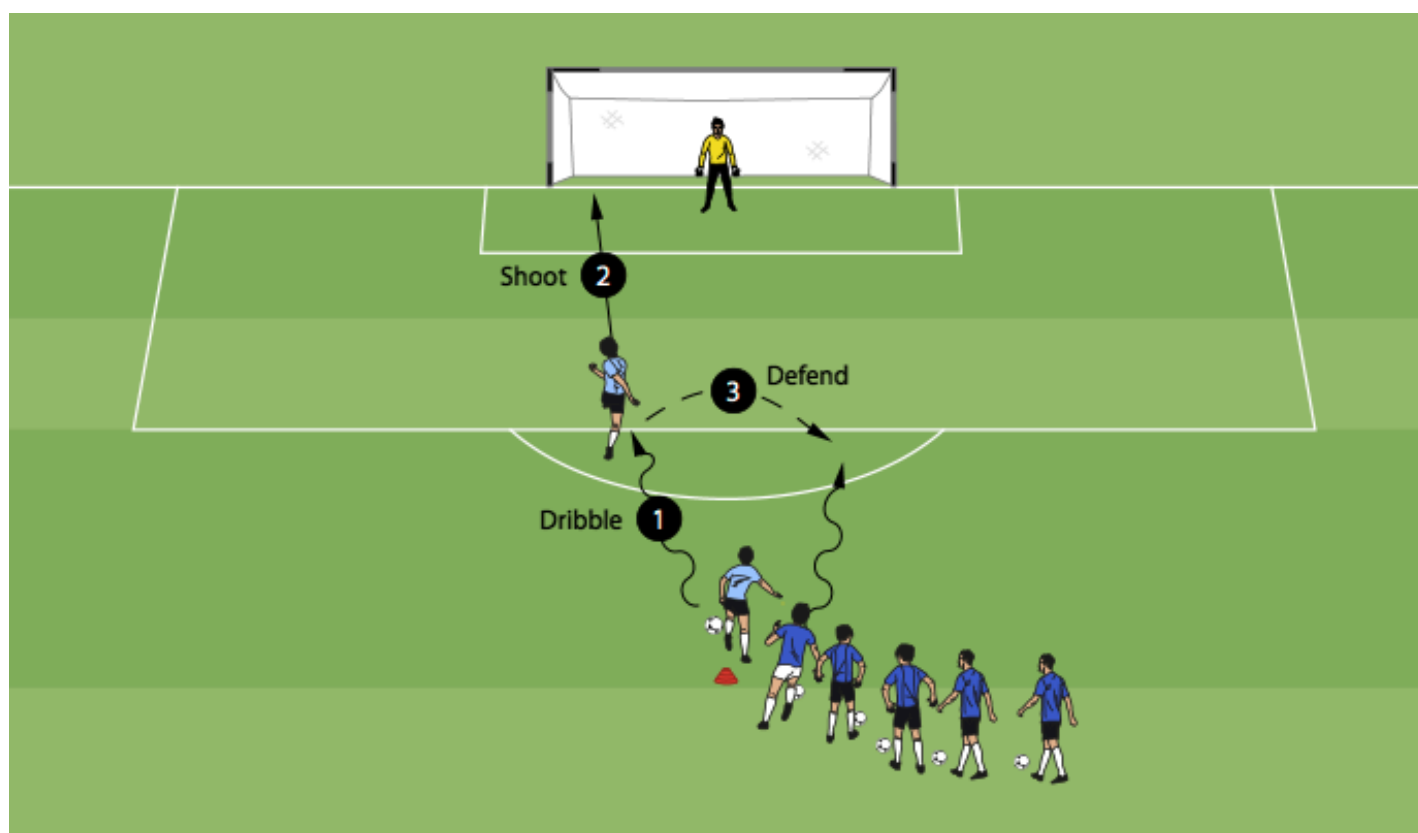
**SET UP** a field with two mini goals or 'gates' on either side. Place a soccer ball in the middle of the field. Create two teams and have the players line up at either end line.

**HOW IT WORKS** - When the coach says 'go' the first player from each line runs out to play 1v1. Each round two new players come out.

Another variation of this game is rather than having players attacking in one direction, allowing them to score on any of the four goals.

**COACHING POINTS** - This game gives an advantage to faster players. Try to match players up based on speed for even duals. If there is a big speed difference a coach can adjust the ball position forward or back to challenge the faster player.

# Wave after Wave



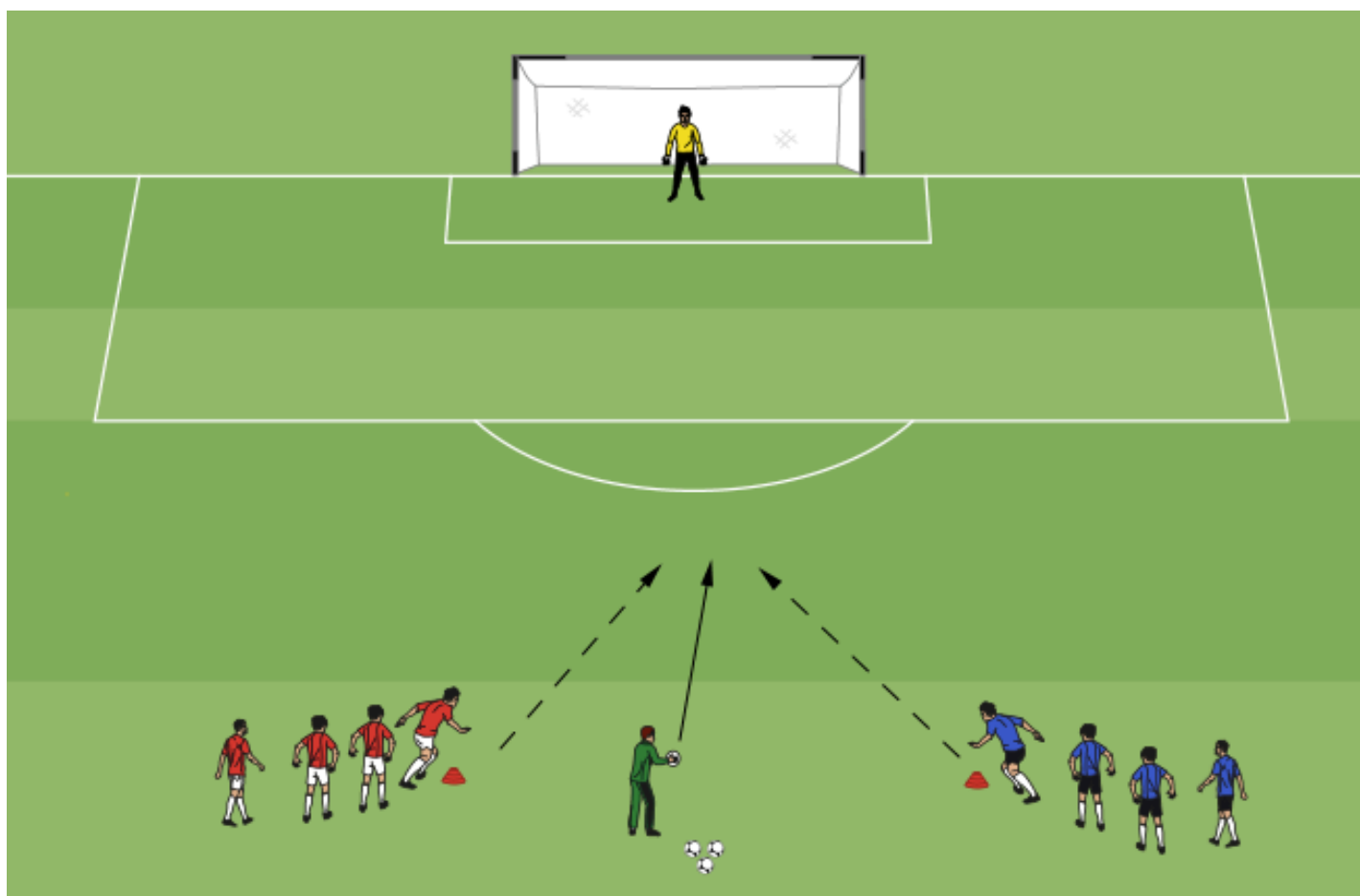
**Wave after Wave** is a fast-paced 1v1 game where the offensive player immediately transitions to defense after their shot.

**SET UP** a cone 25-30 yards away from a large goal to function as a line for the attackers. Players in line need soccer balls. (*While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/parent be the GK for U5- U8 players*).

**HOW IT WORKS** - The first player in line gets a free shot on goal without any defense. Immediately following the shot, the attacker becomes the defender and the next player in line can start. This goes on so that the player that shoots always defends the next player in line. If the defender steals the ball they are off and the attacker who lost it immediately becomes the defender to the next player in line. The first player to score 5 goals wins.

**COACHING POINTS** - Transitions happen really quickly in this game so it's important that players are focused and ready to go. Make sure that players are ready to defend after they shoot. This game also works with 2v2 or 3v3.

# Battle for the ball



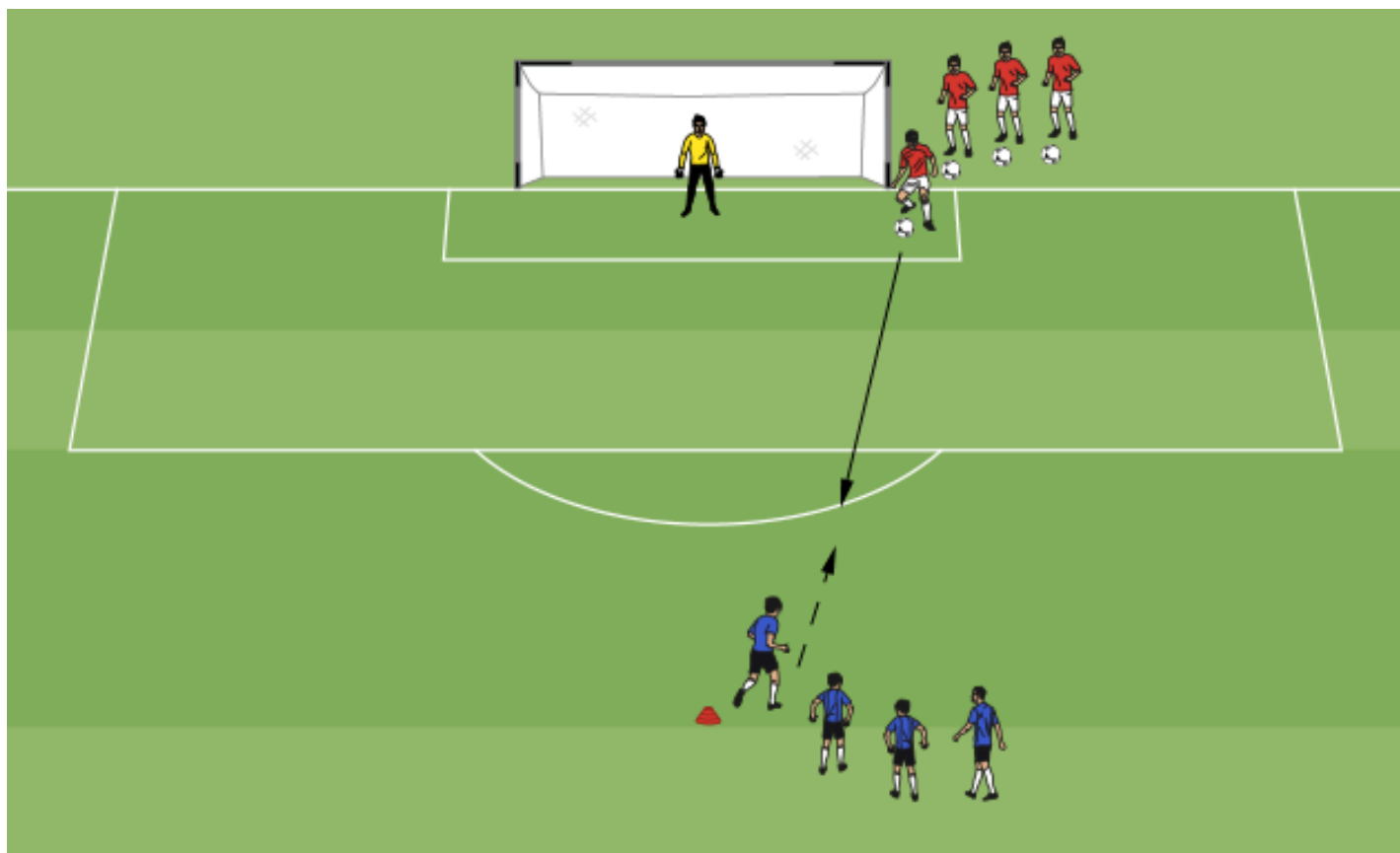
Toss out a 50-50 ball and let players battle for the ball in this competitive 1v1 drill.

**SET UP** - Have players form two lines about 25-30 yards away from a large goal. The coach stands between the two lines with a supply of soccer balls. ***(While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/ parent be the GK for U5- U8 players)***.

**HOW IT WORKS** - When the first players from each line are ready, the coach tosses a ball out onto the field. The two players play 1v1 with both of them trying to score on the large goal. The coach can have players in line start standing up or for different variations can have players start in different positions. These could include players sitting down with legs straight out in front and hands on their head, plank position, lying on their backs with arms and legs straight in the air, etc.

**COACHING POINTS** - This game is 1v1 at it's finest as players jostle for the 50-50 ball. Let the players battle it out and find ways to beat their opponent. Encourage players to hustle, work hard, and never give up on a play.

# Straight Up 1v1 to Goal



This is a common variation of 1v1 going to goal to develop excellent attackers and defenders.

**SET UP** - Split the players in half in order to create a line of defenders at a post and a line of attackers at the top of the D. Players who start in the defending line need soccer balls. *(While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/parent be the GK for U5- U8 players).*

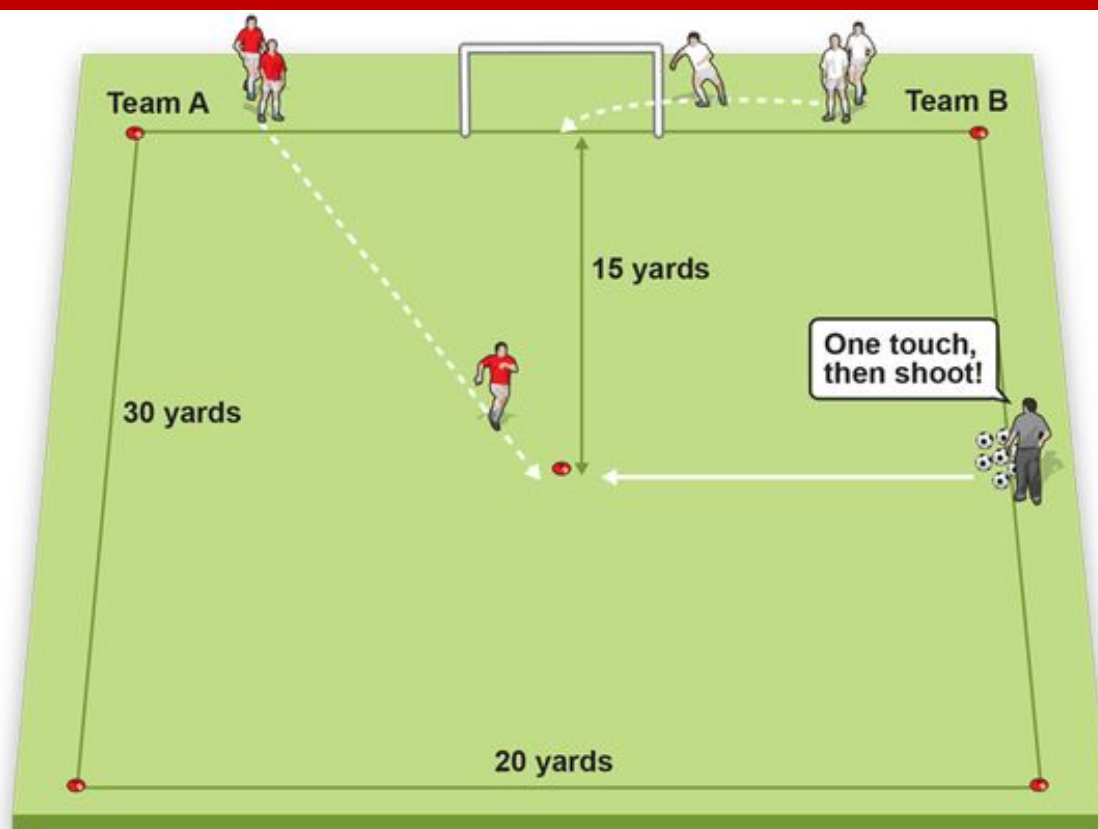
**HOW IT WORKS** - The soccer balls start with the defenders who pass the ball out to attackers. The attackers take the defenders on 1v1 and try to score on the large goal. If the defender steals the ball, the round is over. Players switch sides after every dual.

**RECOMMENDED:** Coaches can set up mini goals across from the large goal so that if a defender wins the ball, they can try to score on the mini goals.

**COACHING POINTS** - Make sure defenders approach the attackers with a sideways on stance in order to force them one way. It can be helpful for defenders to force attackers to use their weak foot. If a defender is unsure of an attacker's dominant foot, it is reasonable to assume that their left side is weaker because the majority of players are right footed.



# QUICK... SHOOT!



**SET UP** - Place a goal on one end line of a 30 x 20 yards playing area. A cone is placed about 15 yards from the center of the goal.

**HOW TO PLAY** - Divide your players into two teams. Team A stands on the end line about 5 yards away from the left goalpost. Team B stands 5 yards away from the right goalpost.

You stand on the edge of the playing area with some soccer balls.

On your signal, the first player in team A runs to the marker cone. At the same time, the first player in team B runs round the left goalpost and becomes the 'keeper'. As the A team player rounds the marker cone, you play a ball into the playing area.

You decide if the player in team A has one touch or more to control the ball and shoot.

As soon as the first player in team A shoots, the second players in both teams start their runs.

If the shot goes in or is saved, the goalie returns the ball to the coach. If the shot misses the goal the player who missed has to get the ball back to the coach.

Team A has to score as many goals as possible in a given time or until you run out of balls to serve. Then it's Team B's turn to shoot.

If you have more than eight in your squad, set up two games – you don't want young players standing in lines for longer than necessary. Make sure your players move fast and make it competitive – keep the score.

KEY: Player movement .....▶ Ball movement —▶ Run with ball .....▶ Shot —▶

**PROGRESSION:** Specify what part of the foot players must shoot with: the instep or the toe.

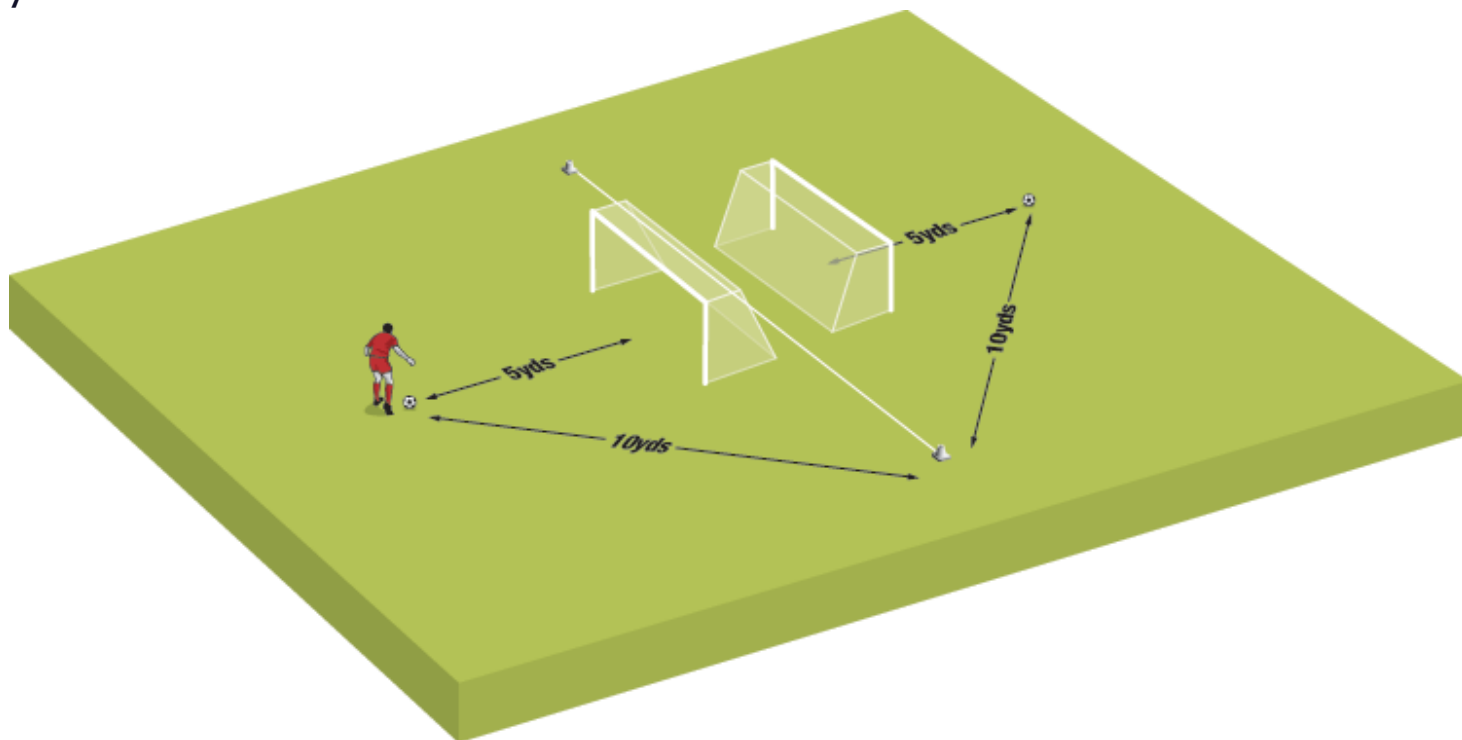
## Fast Feet & Shoot!

An individual session to get young players to unleash shots at goal when they are on the run. Good for coordination and balance with some ball control and of course shooting. If you want a bit of a competition put the stop clock on them and see who is the fastest

**SET UP** - Get all your squad to have a go at this set up, use the area as marked, and you will need cones, balls, a stopwatch and two goals.

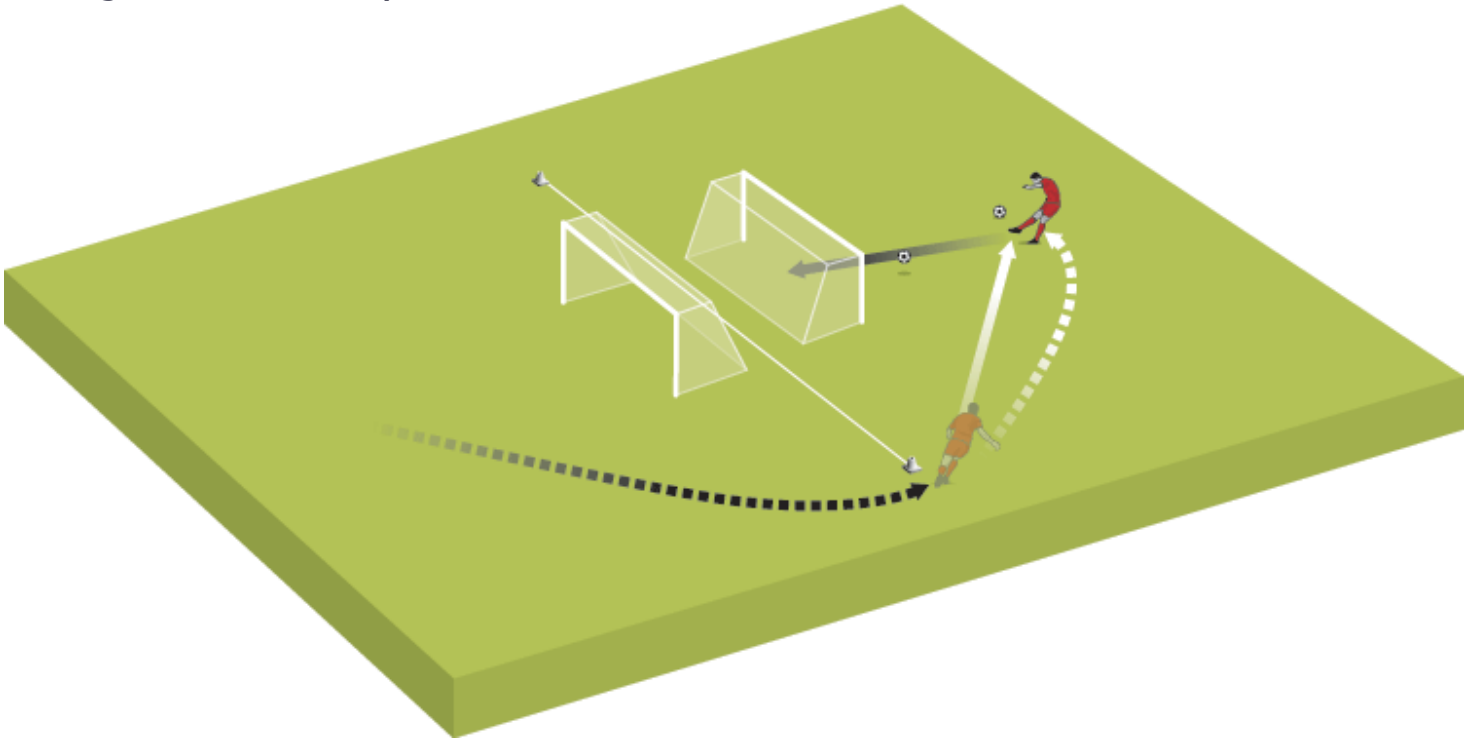
**HOW TO PLAY IT** - You need to put the goals back to back and place a ball each side 5 yards in front of each of the goals. Players go individually starting with the first ball and dribbling around the goal. At the half way point they knock the ball in front of themselves and sprint after it, shooting first touch when they get to that point. They then dribble the next ball around to the first goal, knock the ball in front of themselves then sprint to it and shoot. If you are timing the move use the stopwatch and see who is the fastest.

**TECHNIQUE** - First of all, this is a fun session for the players – who doesn't like to shoot! But on a more serious note it requires good technique which you should look out for.

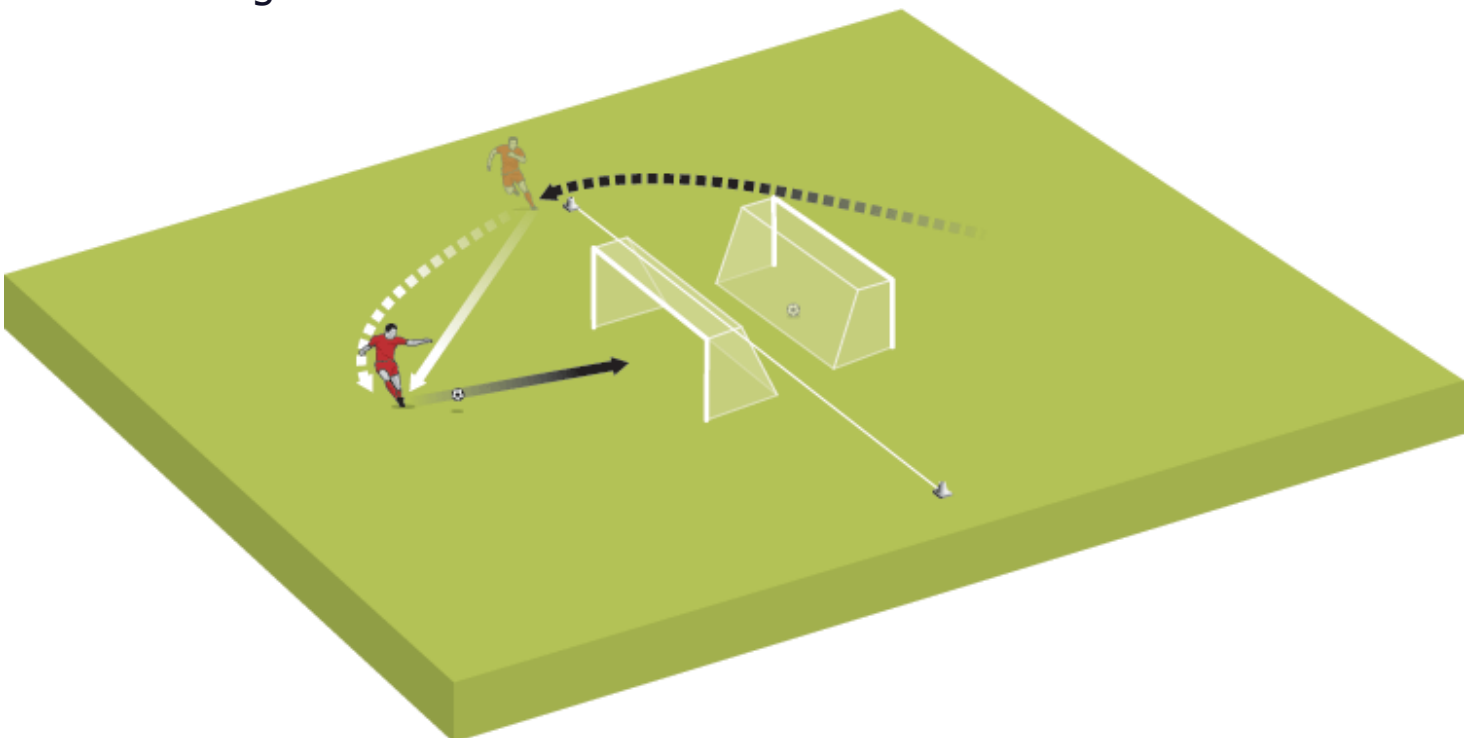


1. You need to set up with two goals and balls in front of each of the goals five yards distance from the goal

2. Players pass the ball in front of them at the cone into an area in front of goal where they can knock it and run onto it and shoot



3. Look for good dribbling and players knocking the ball into good areas in front of goal



4. Once the shot has been made the player moves to the second ball and dribbles around to the other goal

# Ready, Fire, Aim

The goal doesn't move, so when your forwards receive the ball with their backs to goal they should know where to shoot without aiming.

## Set-up

- 25 by 20 yard playing area.
- 2 Forwards, 2 Keepers (*if age appropriate*), 4 Servers.

## What this session is about

1. Playing with your back to goal.
2. Turning.
3. Shooting quickly and accurately.
4. Scoring goals.
5. Gaining confidence to shoot with both feet.

## What to think about

- Communication – is it verbal, by signal or through movement?
- Create space before the ball arrives.
- Accuracy and weight of pass.
- Quick control to set up immediate shot. Take a second touch if necessary.
- What type of turn – e.g. inside/outside hook? Let ball travel across body?
- Sharp body swivel.

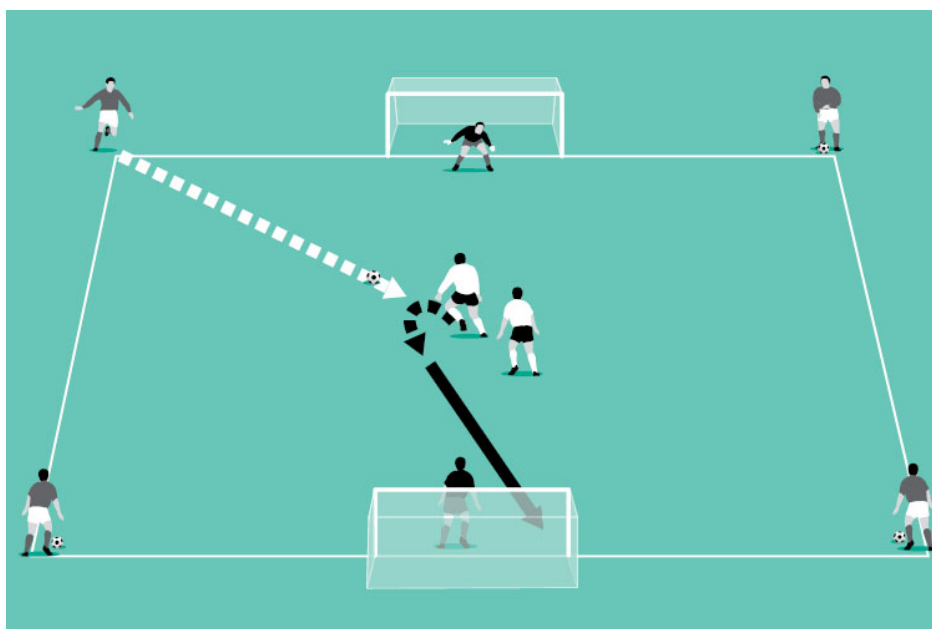
## What you get your players to do

Two forwards stand centrally, back-to-back, with their back to the goal they are attacking. A server stands in each corner. The first forward receives a ball from one of the servers facing them, then turns and shoots. The second forward does the same. Repeat with the second server.

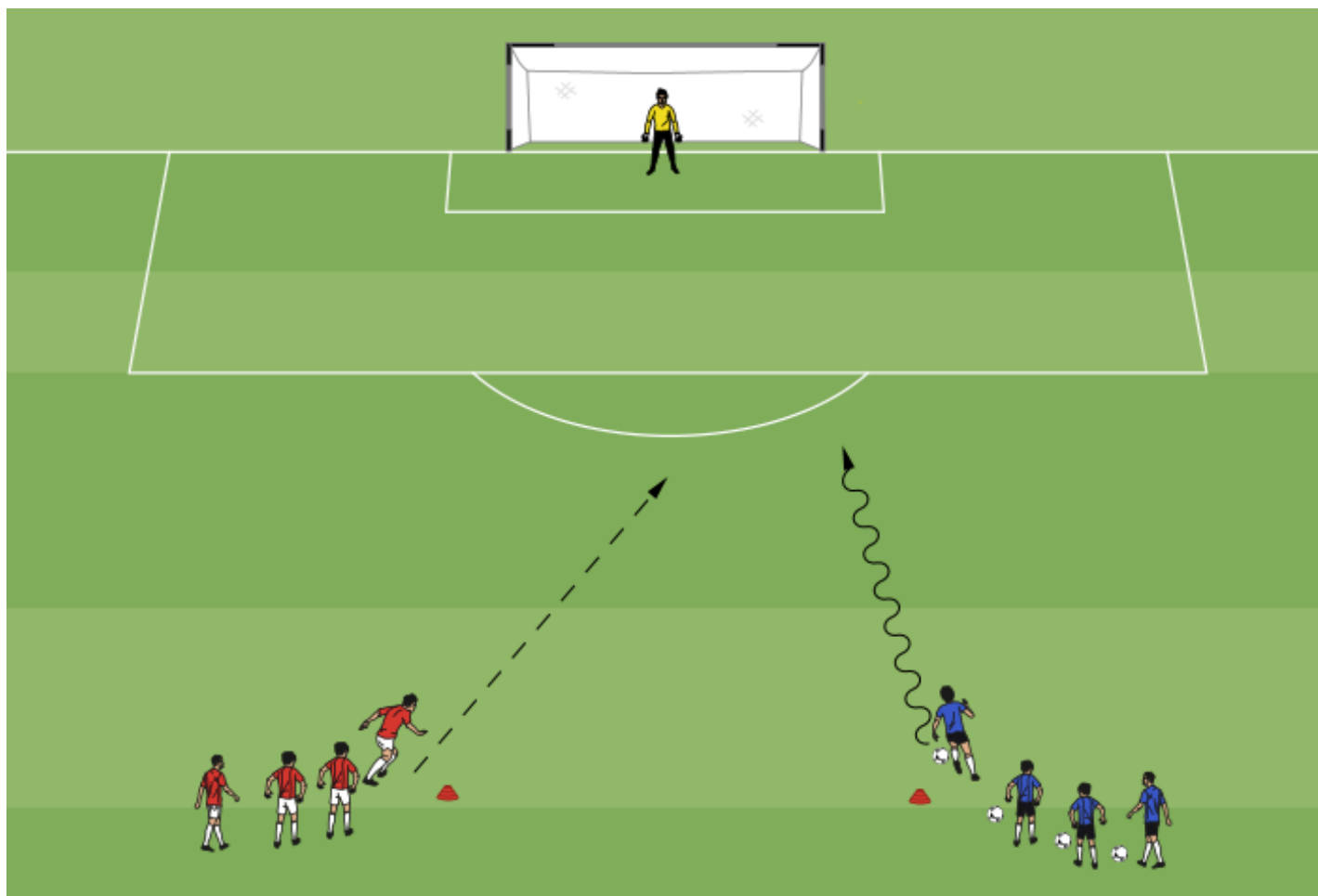
Make sure forwards turn both ways and practice using the inside and outside of both feet to control the ball.

Now rotate players so servers become forwards and vice versa.

Turn and shoot. It's that easy.



# 1v1 to Goal with Defender Trailing



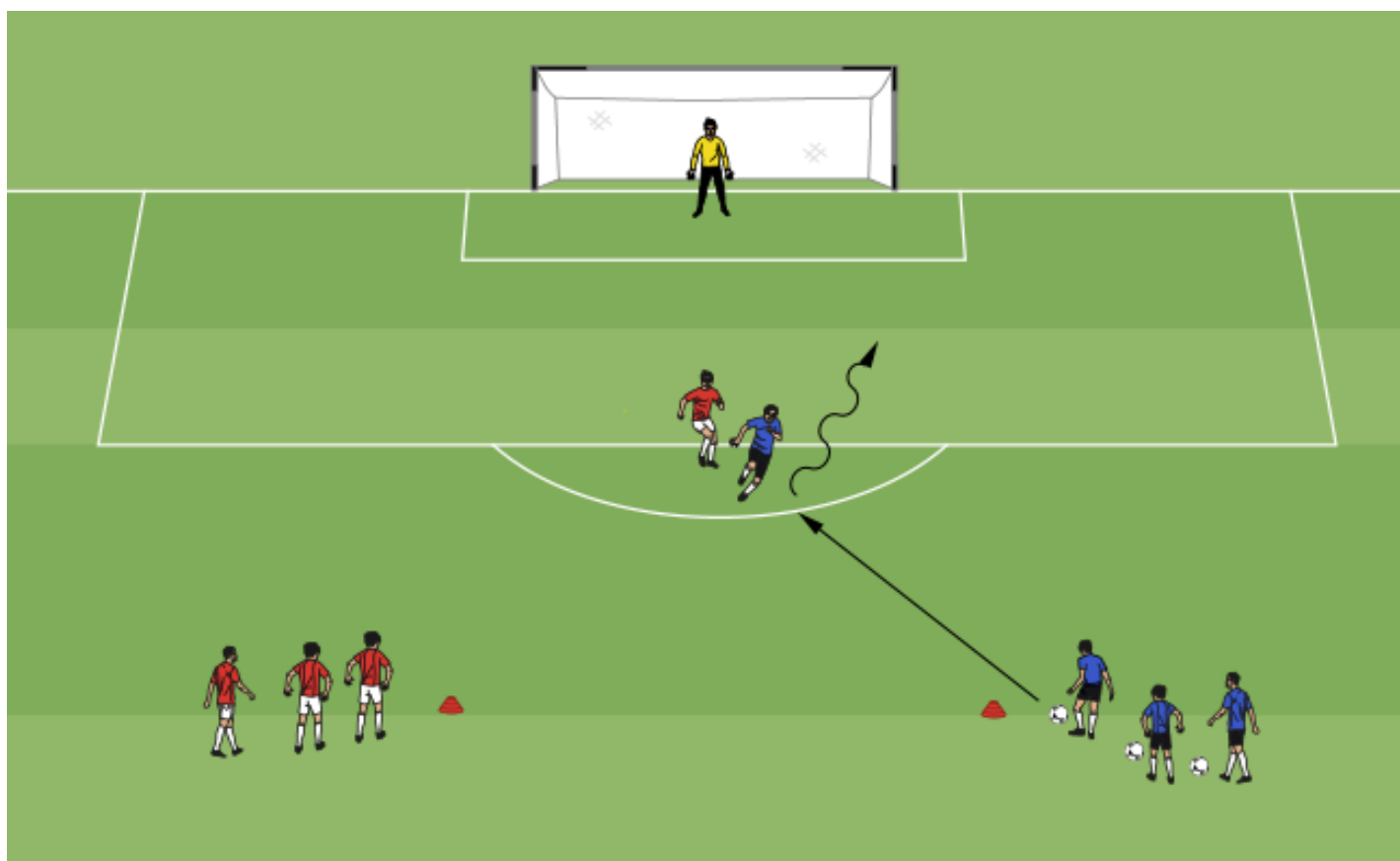
In **1v1 to Goal with Defender Trailing**, the offensive players try to capitalize on breakaway opportunities. The defenders try to chase down the attackers from behind to prevent a shot.

**SET UP** - Have players form two lines about 25-30 yards away from the goal. The players in one line start with soccer balls. ***(While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/ parent be the GK for U5- U8 players).***

**HOW IT WORKS:** The first player in the attacking line dribbles towards the goal and tries to score. As soon as the attacker moves, the defender can try to chase down the attacking player from behind. If the attacker scores they earn a point. If the defender prevents a shot, they get a point. Have players switch lines after every round.

**COACHING POINTS** - Players in the attacking line have to dribble at speed so that the defender doesn't catch them. To make this more challenging for the attackers, the lines can be backed up or the defenders can start closer.

# 1v1 with Back to Pressure



**1v1 with back to Pressure** is a great 1v1 drill for developing strikers who receive the ball with defenders at their backs. Attackers in this drill learn how to create space for themselves and get past defenders when they are tightly marked.

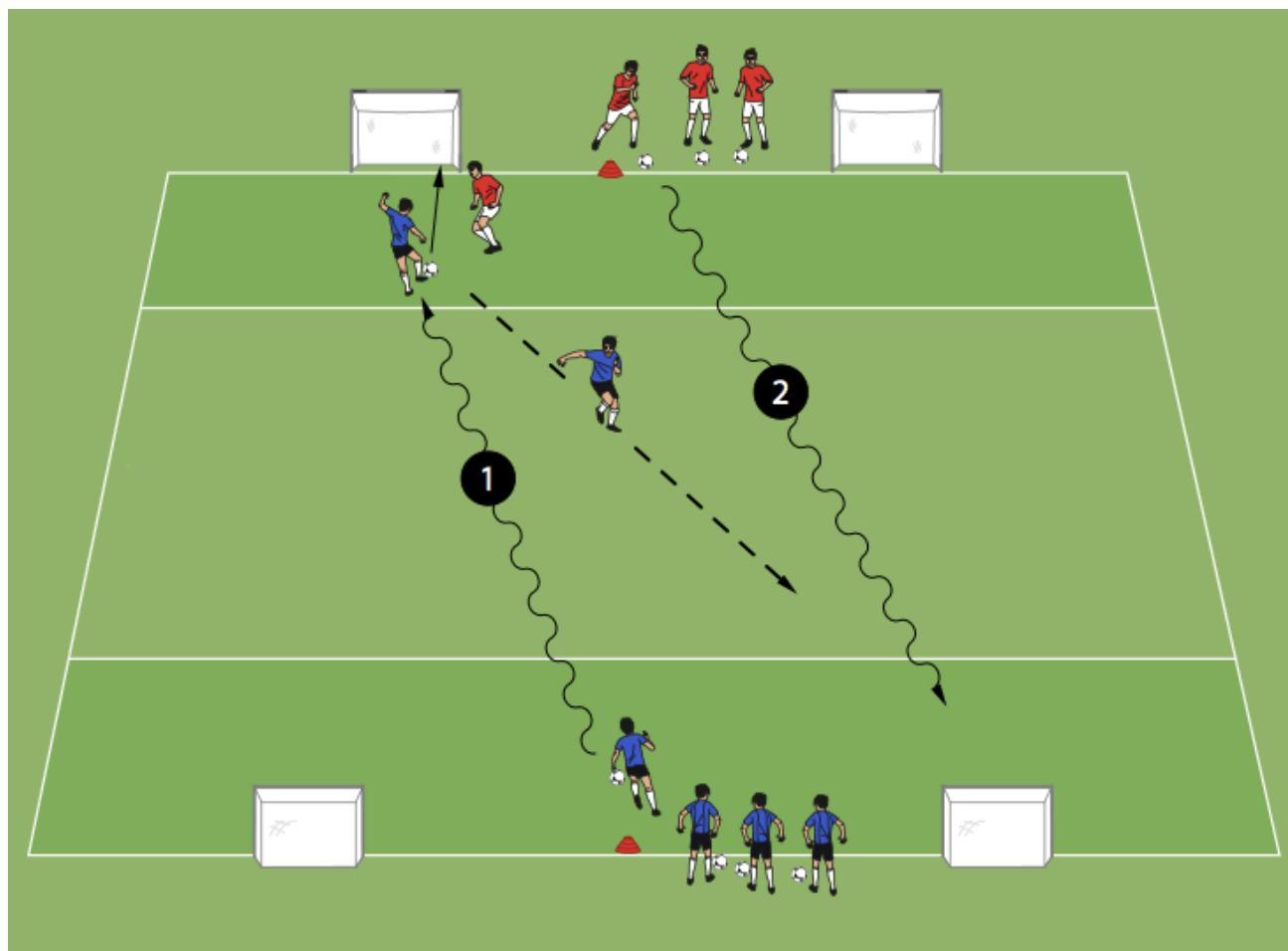
**SET UP** - Split players in half and have one half start as attackers first while the other half starts as defenders first. *(While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/parent be the GK for U5- U8 players).*

**HOW IT WORKS** - The first player from each line enters the field. The second player in the attacking line passes the ball to the attacker. The attacking player has pressure on their back and must find a way to beat the defender to turn and shoot. After each round the players switch lines.

**RECOMMENDED:** A coach can set up two mini goals or gates opposite the large goal so that if the defender wins the ball, they can score as well.

**COACHING POINTS** - Make sure the attacking player moves quickly to create some space between themselves and the defender when calling for the ball. The attacker can also use their body to hold the defender off and get in a good position to receive a pass. Defenders should try to close the space down by staying on the attacker's hip and not allowing them to turn.

# 1v1 Flying Changes



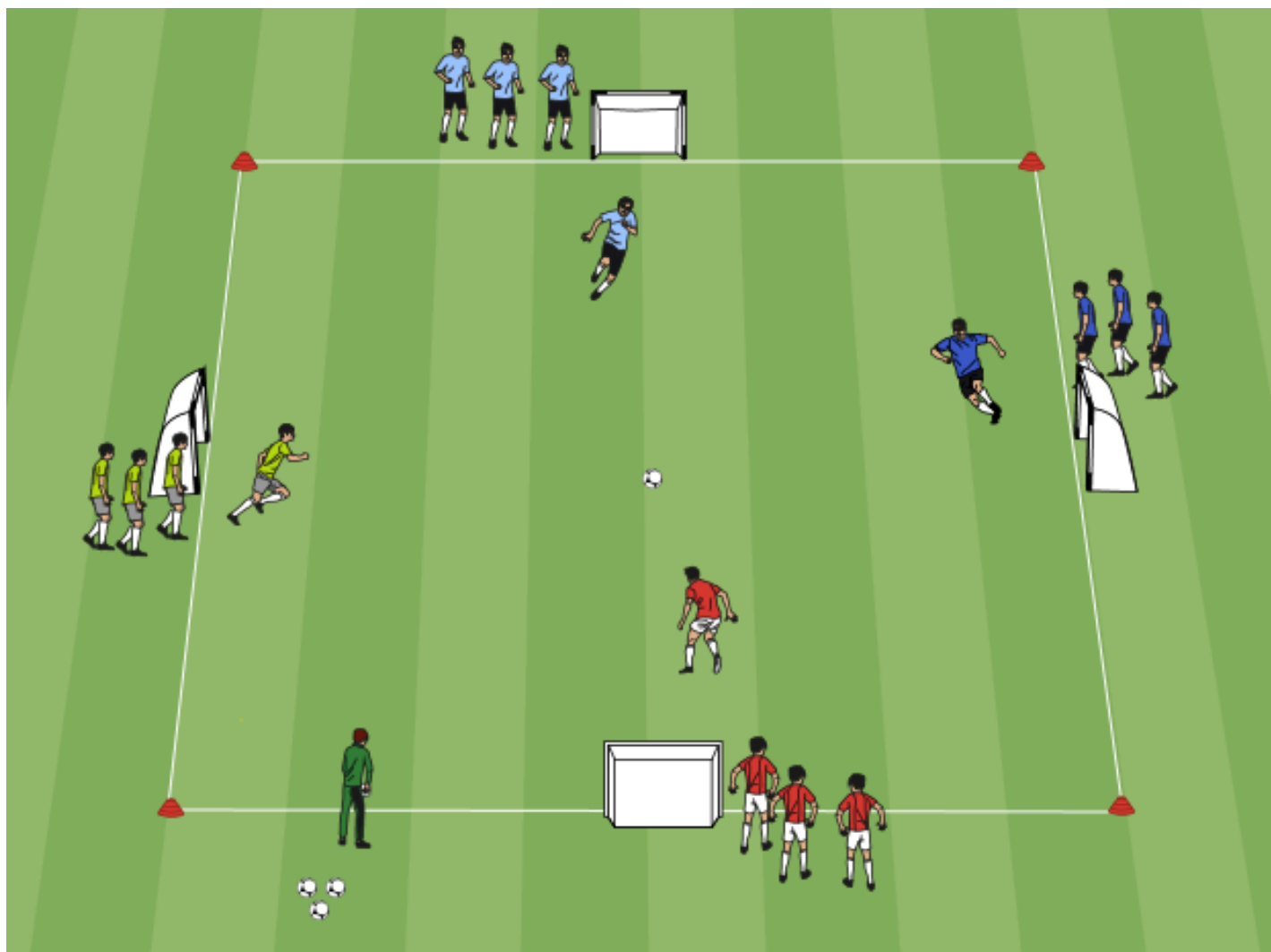
**Flying Changes** is a fast paced, back and forth 1v1 game that players will enjoy.

**SET UP** a field with two mini goals or 'gates' on either side. Create a line of players at each end line. The two lines should be relatively even. All of the players need soccer balls.

**HOW IT WORKS:** The first players from each line enter the field and play 1v1. As soon as a goal is scored or the ball goes out of play, a new attacker comes on from the side of the field that the ball went out on. The player who was defending the side where the ball went out leaves the field. At the same time, the player who was just on the attack defends the oncoming player. This game emphasizes speed of play and quick transitions.

**COACHING POINTS** - Walking the players through a 'practice round' can help players get the hang of the drill before playing for real. Once players understand this 1v1 variation, it's a really fun game. Make sure players in line are ready to go with soccer balls so that they can attack quickly when the ball goes out of play on their side. Being ready to go can be a huge advantage for attacking players. If a defender is out of position from attacking in the previous round, the attacker can get a head start.

# Score for the Advantage



**Score for the Advantage** is a fun 1v1v1v1 game where players get to add a teammate to help them each time they score a goal.

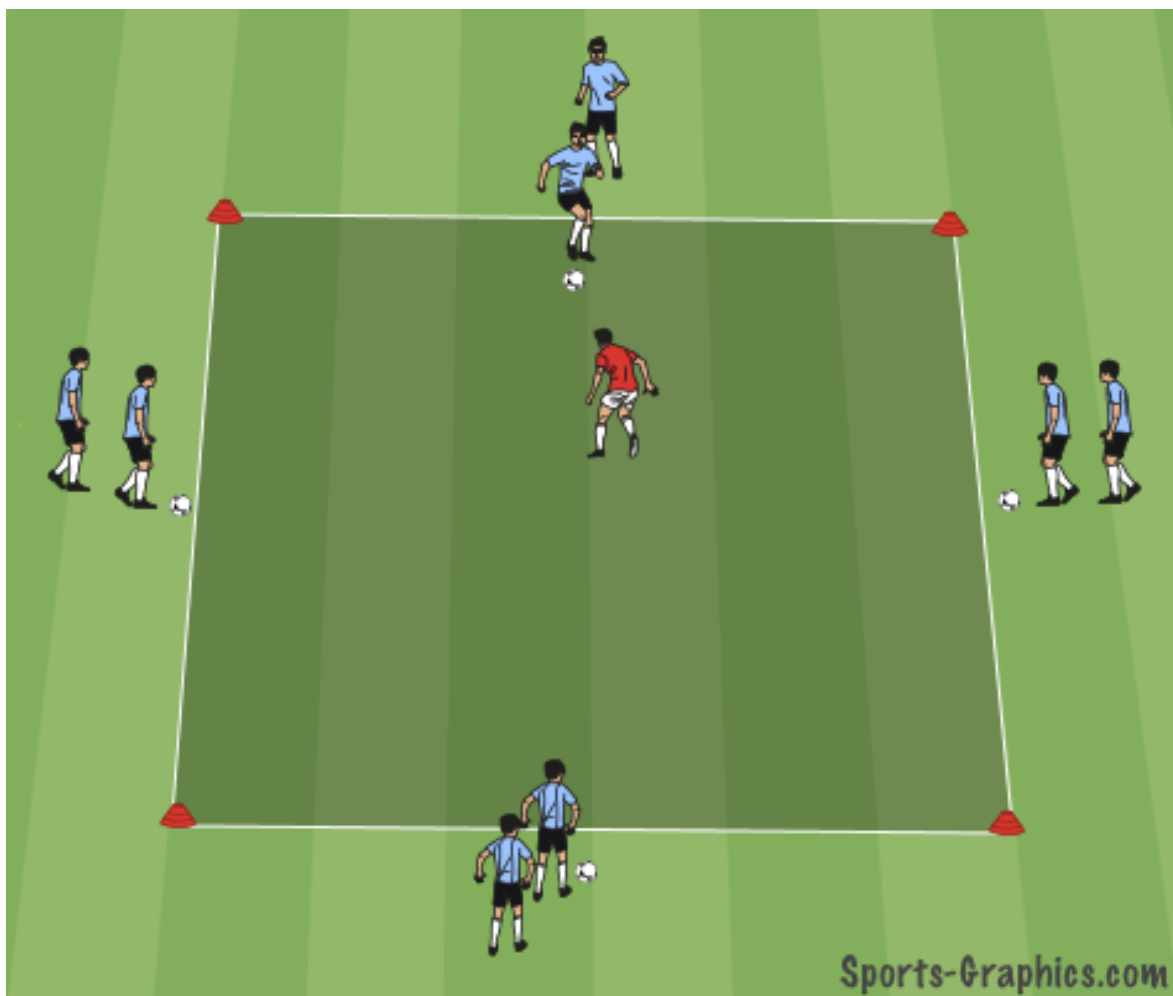
**SET UP** - First, set up a square field with a goal or 'gate' on each of the four sides. Separate players into four even teams. This game works well with three players on each team.

**HOW IT WORKS** - The first player from each team comes out to play 1v1v1v1. Each player defends one goal and can score on the other three. The coach tosses a ball out onto the field to start the game. In the event that a player scores a goal, they can bring on an additional player so that it is 2v1v1v1. Each time a player scores, they add to their team. The first team to score a goal with all of their players on the field wins.

**COACHING POINTS** - Make sure teams are relatively even so that the game is close. Teams should start with their best 1v1 player so that they increase their odds of scoring and bringing on additional players.



# Defender in the Middle



**Defender in the Middle** is a competitive 1v1 variation where the defender must win the ball in order to get out of the middle.

**SET UP** a 10×10 yard square grid and have players form lines on each of the four sides of the grid as shown in the diagram. Assign one player to start in the middle of the grid as a defender. The players in the lines around the square need soccer balls.

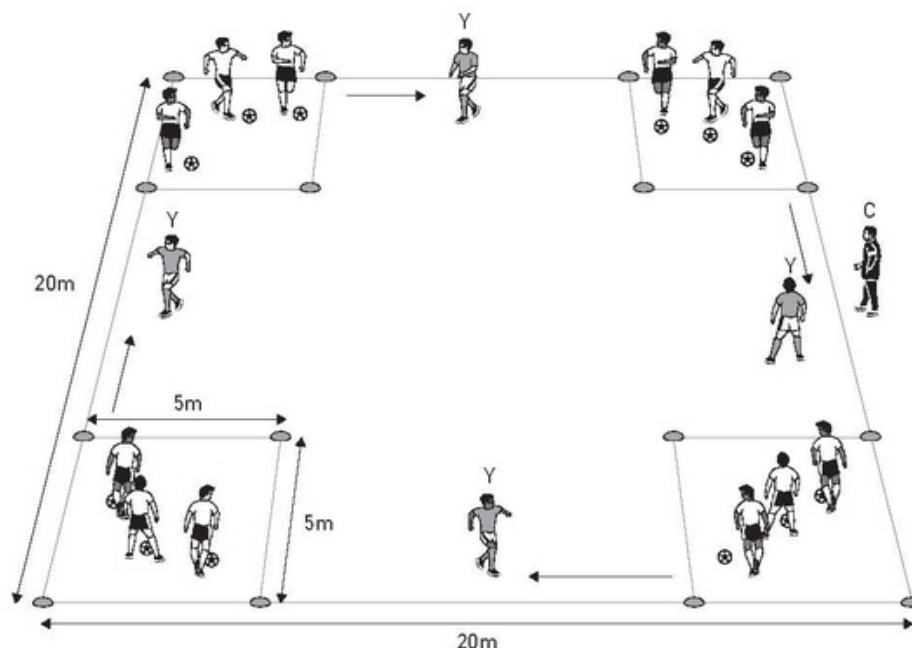
This drill works best with nine players or less so that none of the lines have more than two players. We always try to avoid long lines during drills so that players can maximize the amount of time that they are active during practice. If you would like to use this drill for more than nine players, it may be best to set up a second grid.

**HOW IT WORKS** - The first player in one of the outer lines dribbles into the square and tries to get past the defender 1v1 to get to the opposite side. If the dribbler successfully makes it to the other side, the defender must stay in the middle to defend the next player. If the dribbler loses the ball or doesn't make it to the other side, the defender is out of the middle and the dribbler who lost it becomes the new defender.

New dribblers enter the square in a clockwise rotation. Once one dribbler gets to the other side or loses their ball, the next dribbler in rotation can start.

**COACHING POINTS** - One important consideration is that dribbles must make it to the opposite side under control with their soccer ball in order to be considered safe. This drill provides an excellent opportunity for players to experiment with different 1v1 moves to try to get past the defender. In addition, defenders are motivated to win the ball so that they can get out of the middle which creates a challenging environment for all players.

# Danger Squares



**Organisation:** Set out a 20 x 20m area with four 5 x 5m squares in each corner. Players are separated into teams of three and placed in each corner square. One defending player (Y) is placed halfway between each square.

**Equipment:** Marker cones, balls.

**Description:** Players dribble their ball around in the corner squares, in and out of spaces without making contact with one another. As the coach shouts 'Go', the players have to travel in a clockwise direction to the next square, without getting tackled by the defender in the middle (Y).

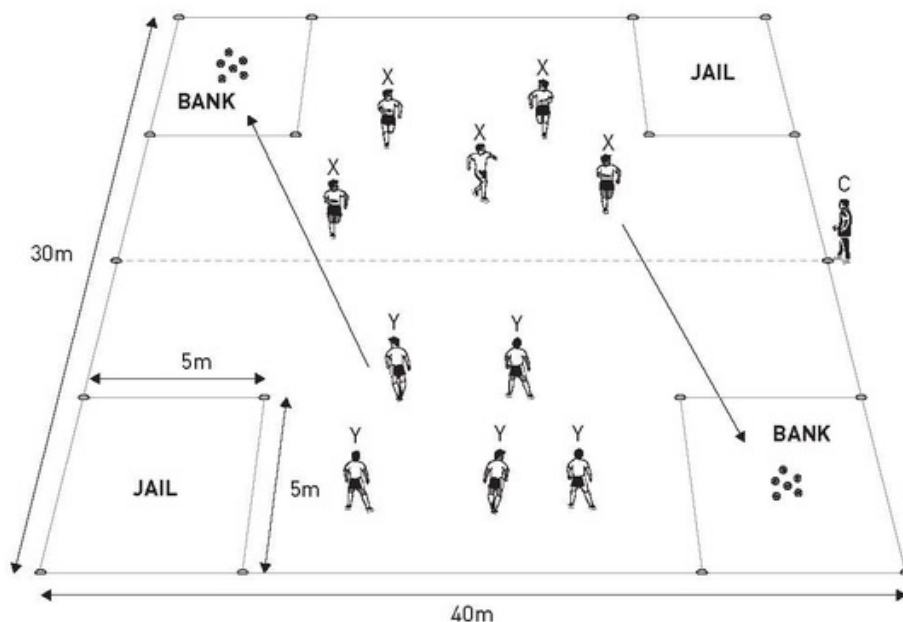
**Key coaching points:** Keep your head up, looking around for opponents and their footballs. Once you have a ball, keep the ball close to your feet. Quick and sharp turns out of each corner.

**Progressions:** Award points to defenders for each time they steal a ball to add a competitive element. If a player loses possession of their ball, they swap with the defender. Allow players to move in any direction when the coach calls 'Go'.

>>> 40 – 41 – 65 – 82

Fun football 37

# Team Pursuit



**Organisation:** Set out a 40 x 30m area. Divide the area into two halves with a centre line of cones. Mark out a 5 x 5m square in each of the four corners of the area, one square in each half is the 'jail' and the other is the 'bank'. Place an equal number of footballs in each team's bank and divide the players into two teams (X and Y)

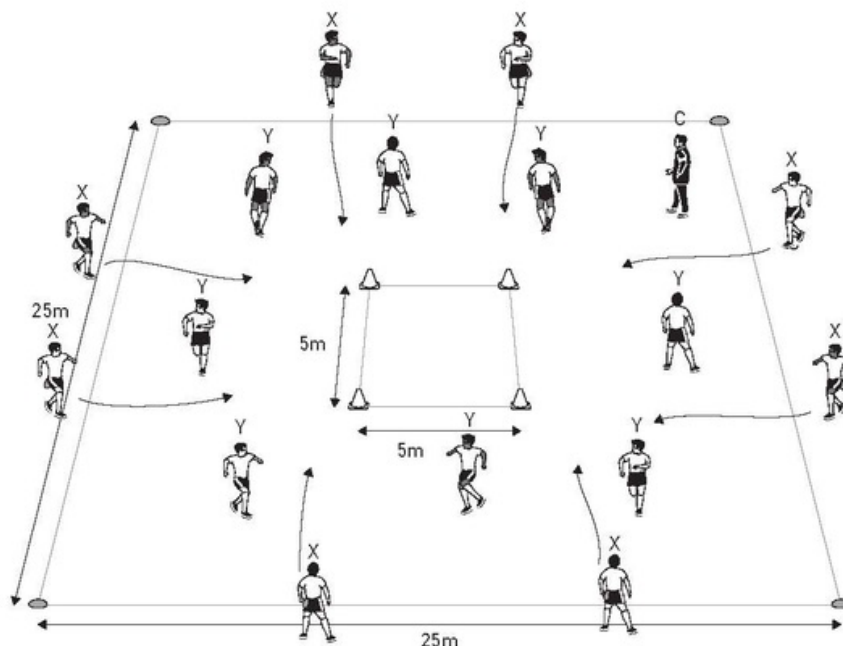
**Equipment:** Marker cones, footballs, bibs.

**Description:** Each team aims to collect all the balls by invading the other team's half of the area, taking a football from their bank and dribbling it back to their own bank without getting tagged. Players are safe in their own half, but if a player is tagged while in the opponent's half, they must go directly to the opponents' jail. A player is released from jail only when a teammate crosses into the opposing half and high-five's them. The first team to collect all of the balls in their bank wins.

**Key coaching points:** Keep your head up, looking around for opponents and footballs. Keep your ball close to your feet when dribbling. Work as a team to try to collect balls, defend your own balls and release teammates from jail.

Fun football 

# Battlefield



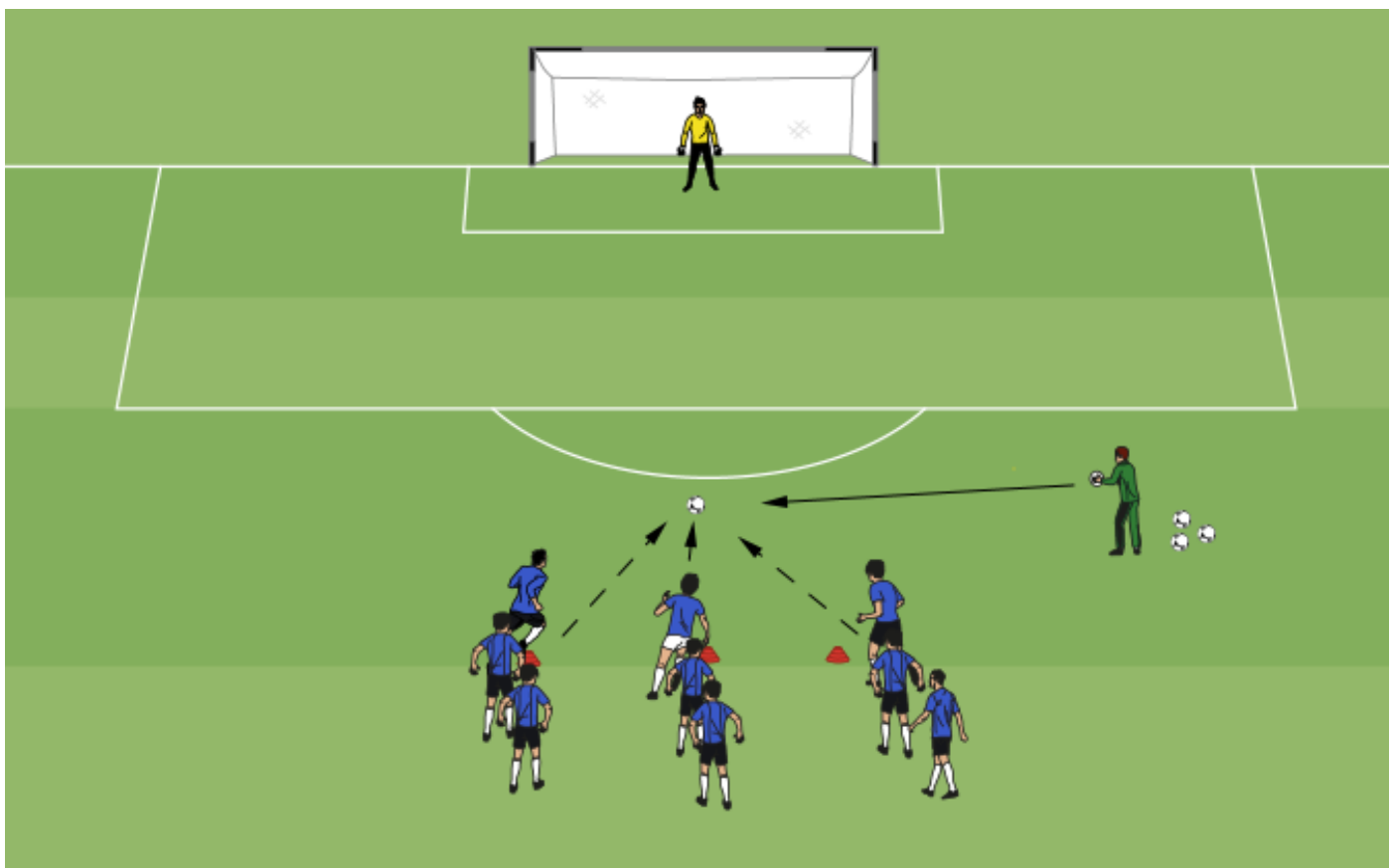
**Organisation:** Set out a 25 x 25m area with a 5 x 5m square in the centre. Organise the players into two equal teams, with one team (X) attacking, standing outside the main area and the other team (Y) defending, standing in the 'battlefield', i.e. inside the area, but outside the small square in the centre. The attacking team (X) have bibs tucked into their shorts.

**Equipment:** Marker cones, traffic cones, bibs.

**Description:** The attacking team members (X) aim to move from outside the area, through the battlefield and into the centre square without having their bib pulled out by the defenders (Y). They can start at any point outside the area and can retreat back behind the line to be safe. If they make it into the centre, they get one point for their team and wait there until the game is over. Any defending player can pull out the bib of any attacking player. Once all of the attacking team are either in the centre square or out of the game (bib pulled out), the teams swap roles and attempt to score more points than their opponents.

*Warming up* 21

# 1v1v1



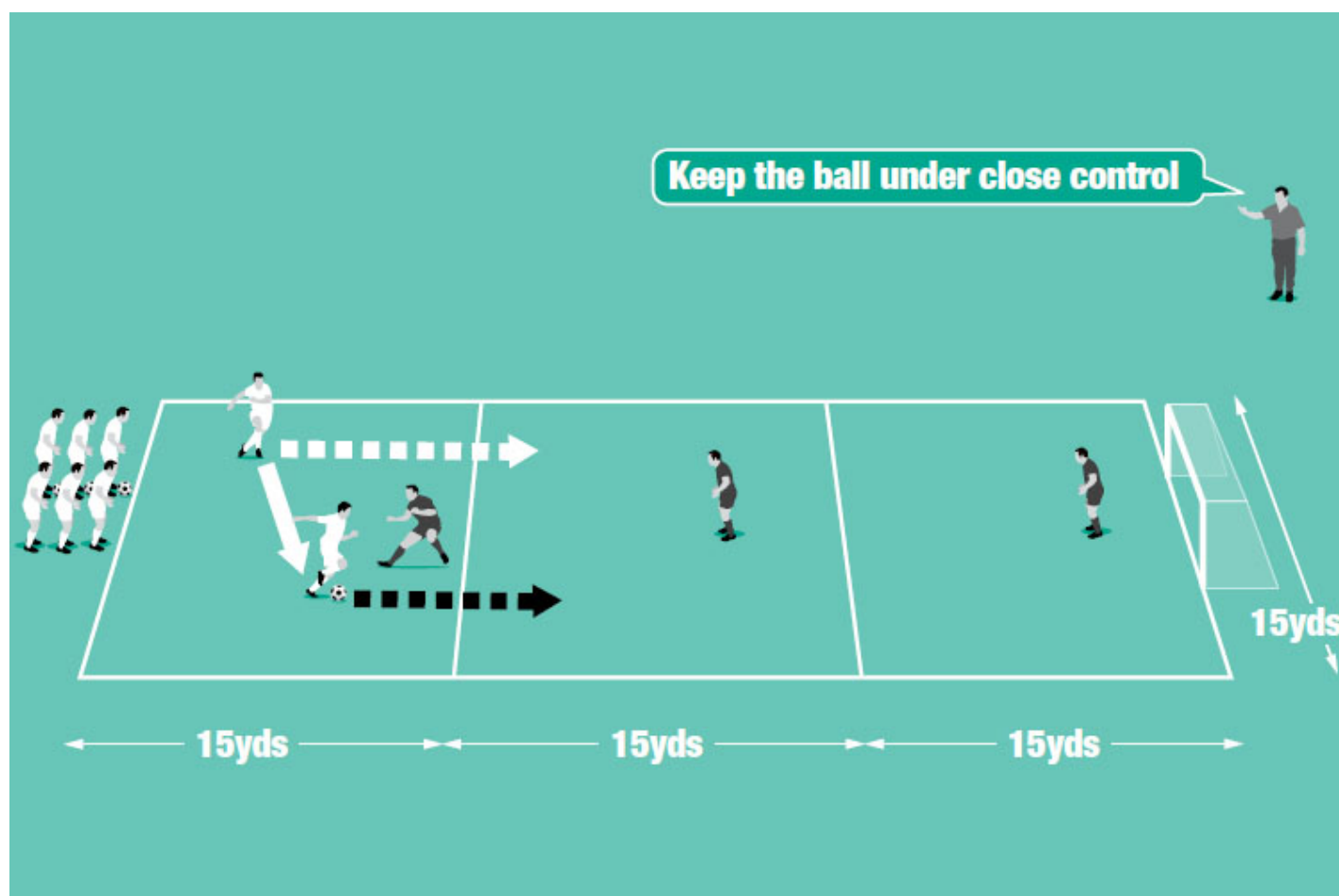
**1v1v1** is a game that is every player for them self with three players trying to score on one goal.

**SET UP** three cones 25-30 yards away from a large goal to function as lines for the players. *(While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/ parent be the GK for U5- U8 players).*

**HOW IT WORKS** - When the first player from each line is ready, the coach tosses a ball out onto the field. The three players go at it 1v1v1 with all three of them trying to score on the large goal. The coach can have players in line start standing up, or for different variations can have players start in different positions. These could include players sitting down with legs straight out in front and hands on their head, plank position, lying on their backs with arms and legs straight in the air, performing a push-up before starting, etc.

**COACHING POINTS** - Emphasize hustle and getting shots off quickly. This game is difficult for attackers who wait because when one player has the ball there are two players defending them.

# Ball Dribble Challenge (Part 1)



Pairs take turns to try to dribble past defenders in zones and then shoot for goal.

This session will test whether your players have the skills to take on and beat defenders, and then go on to score goals. If they haven't, use this practice plan and they will soon have the technique.

## What this session is about

1. Improving dribbling skills and close control.
2. Creating space to shoot.
3. Shooting.

When dribbling the ball, players need to:

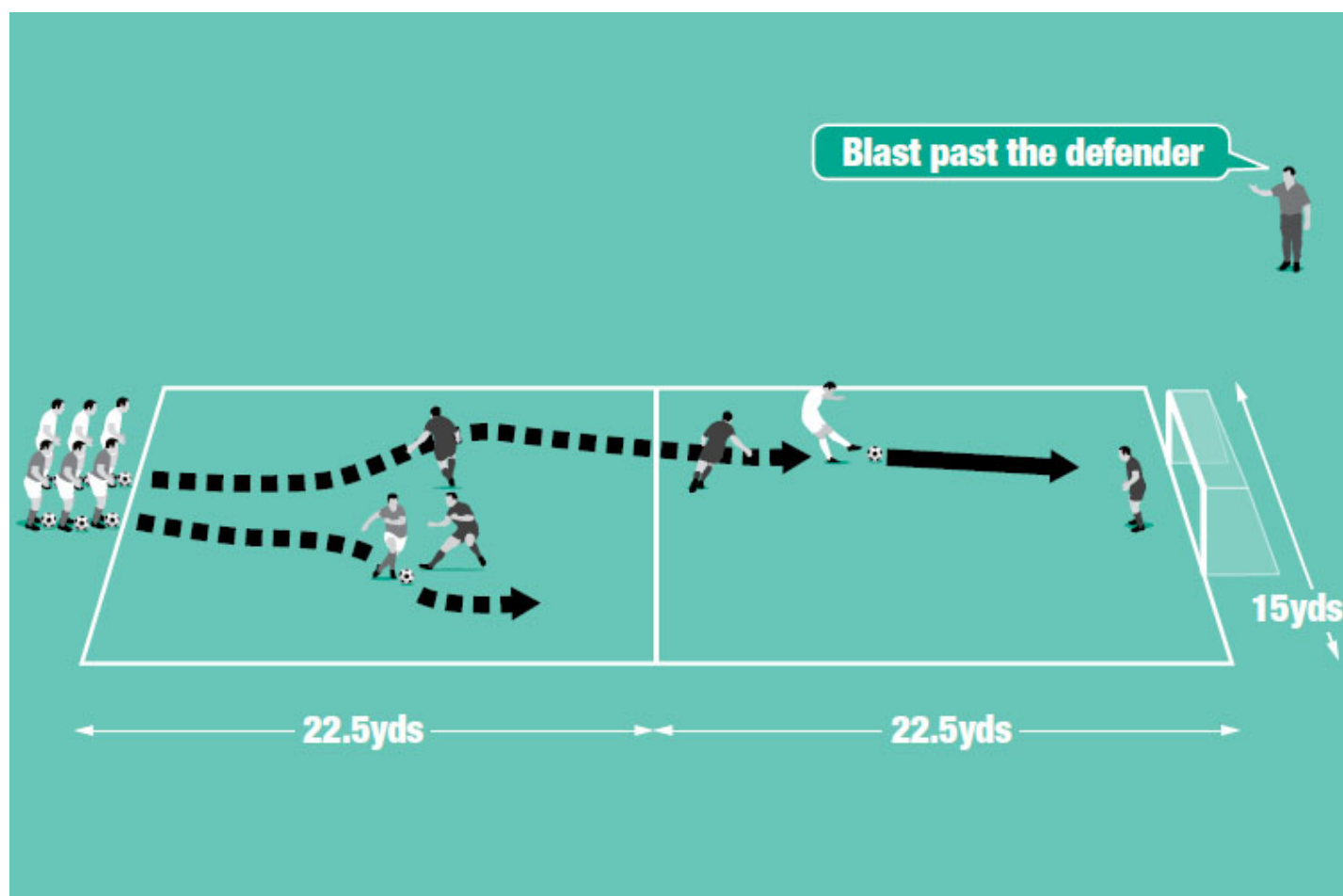
- Keep the ball within playing distance.
- Slow down as they approach a defender.
- Use body feints and deceptive foot movements – try tricks, e.g. Ronaldo stepovers.
- Commit the defender, change your direction and accelerate past.
- Use the inside/outside of both feet.
- Remember – only a little space needs to be created to get a shot off.

## What you get your players to do

Mark out an area, split into three zones, with a goal at one end. Attackers line up in pairs at the end opposite the goal. Place one defender in each of the first two zones and a keeper in the zone with the goal, as shown in the picture above.

Play begins with a 2v1 in the first area. However, one attacker must try to dribble the ball into the second area, rather than wait for a pass there. The pair must then try and beat another defender. If successful, they try to score in the third zone. Swap attackers with defenders regularly.

## Ball Dribble Challenge (Part 2)



Defenders try to stop individuals from different teams going through their zones and scoring a goal.

### Development

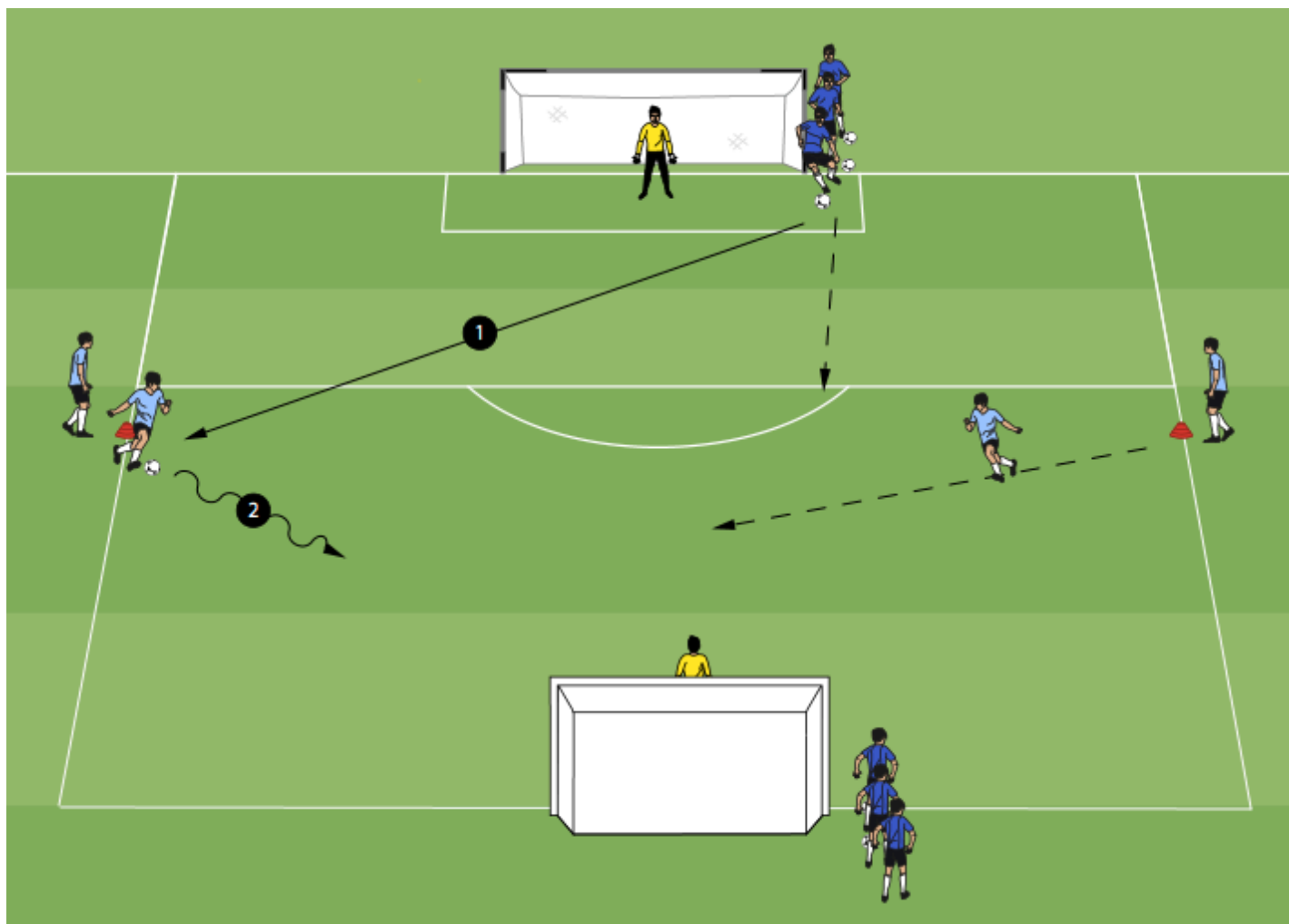
Now split the playing area in two zones rather than three and split players into three teams. The defending team lines up with two defenders in the area nearest the starting attackers, and a goalkeeper and a defender in the other zone. These players must stay in their respective zones.

The other two teams line up at the opposite end to the goal. One player from each team starts dribbling a ball at the same time, where they take on the defenders (who can work independently or as a pair), before dribbling into the second zone to try and score.

The next player in their team can only go once their teammate has either scored or had their ball knocked out of play.

Each team defends for two minutes. Teams score a point for a shot on target and three points for scoring. The team with the most points wins.

# Dortmund 2v1 Shooting Activity



The **Dortmund 2v1 Shooting Activity** is an excellent game for players to practice dribbling towards goal quickly and finishing.

**SET UP** a grid as shown in the diagram with a full-size goal on either end. Have players line up at the posts and form two additional lines on either side of the grid. Players at the posts need soccer balls.

**HOW IT WORKS** - The soccer ball starts at one end with a player on a post. This player can choose to pass to either one of the side players. The player they decide to pass to becomes their teammate and the other player becomes the defender. The players play 2v1 to goal. Once the ball goes out of play a new ball starts on the opposite side. There are no true teams in this game. The first three players to score five goals win.

**COACHING POINTS** - When the ball is played to a side player, they can get an easy chance by dribbling towards the goal quickly while the defender is trailing. In a 2v1 situation, attackers should get a quality shot off every time.

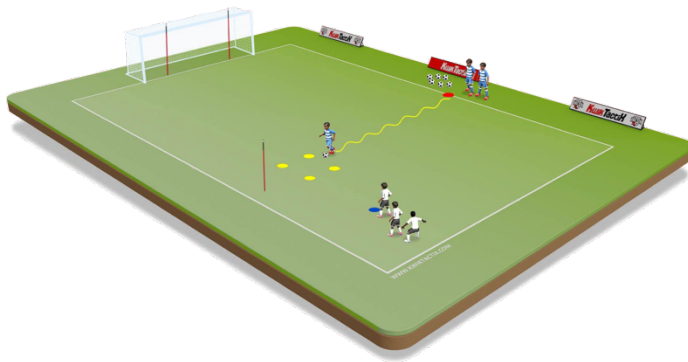


# 1v1 to 2v2 Counter-Attack

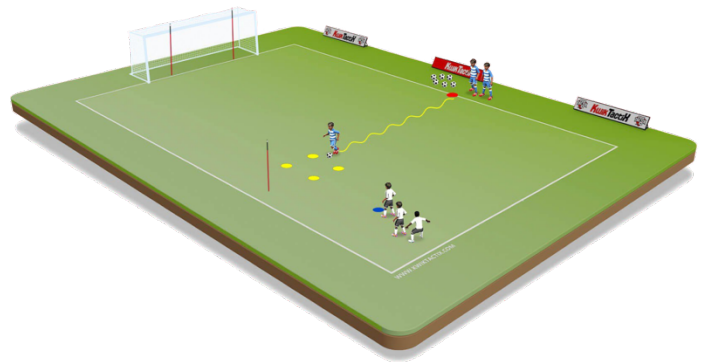
This activity offers coaches the opportunity to coach the fundamentals for attacking and defending as individuals and in pairs.

To begin, a blue player dribbles laterally to a small square marked with flat markers. The player stops the ball with the sole of the foot and proceeds to sprint around a pole approximately 3 yards away. Stopping the ball initiates the transition, with a white player sprinting towards the yellow box, collecting the ball and then penetrating towards the goal.

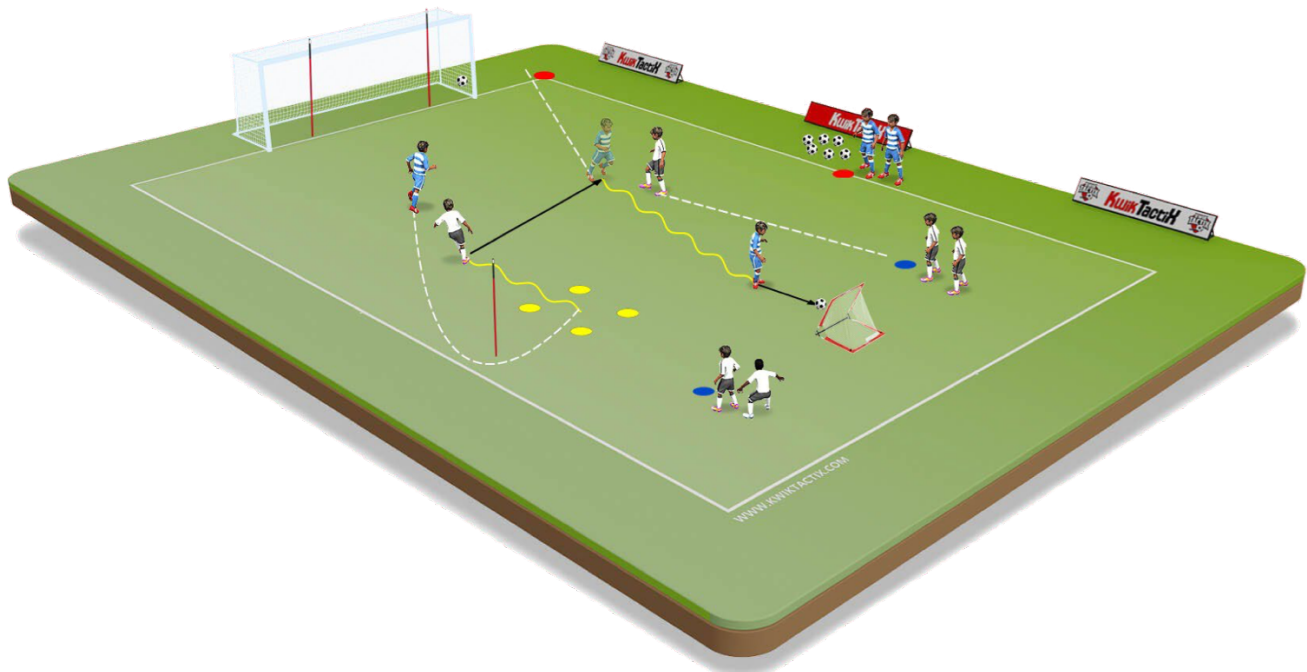
The coach can add challenge by adding poles in the goal and giving 3 points for a goal scored in the corners and 1 down the center. If the blue defender wins possession, he/she passes to the next blue player in the line. There should be constant movement. Progress by adding more players.



1



2



3

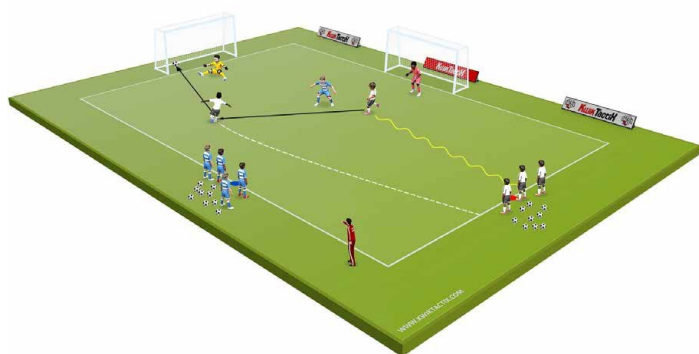
## Attacking & Defending in 2v1 to 2v2

This is a fast-paced attacking and defending transition activity with plenty of goal scoring opportunities. Numbers can be added to progress from individual to small group duels. *(While this activity suggests a goalkeeper to defend the large goal, we recommend a coach/parent be the GK for U5- U8 players).*

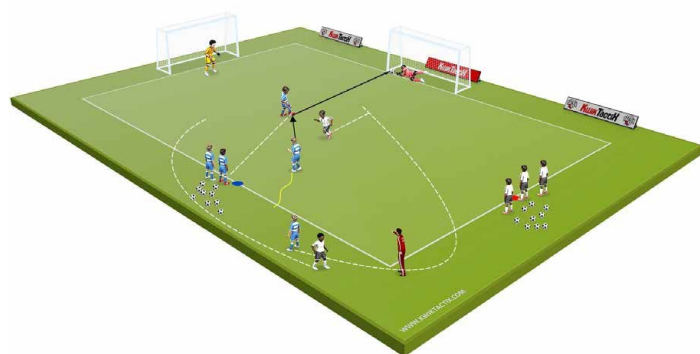
The activity commences with a defender starting in the center of the area and 2 players attacking the goal opposite their line. One player dribbles or passes the ball to the other player.

The attacking objective is to beat the defender and score quickly.

The defending objective is to win possession of the ball and counter-attack in the other goal.



1



2



3

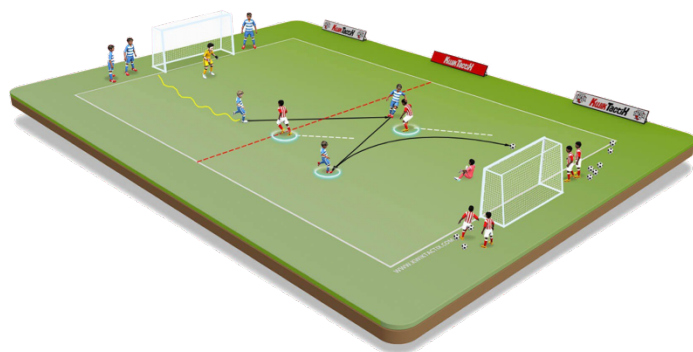
## 2v1 to 3v2 Transition

A terrific activity to generate excitement and enthusiasm from your players. End to end attacking and last-ditch defending are features of this activity focusing on transitional moments between attack and defense.

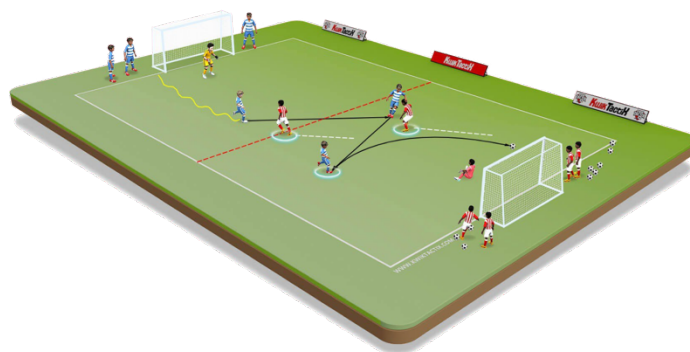
The blue team plays with 3 players for 10 sequences and the red team with 2 players - then switch. A blue team of 3 attacks 2 red defenders - the blue team brings the ball onto the field. The blue team attempts to score.

Whether or not the blue team scores, the last blue player to touch the ball defends in transition against the 2 red players who remain on the field for the counter.

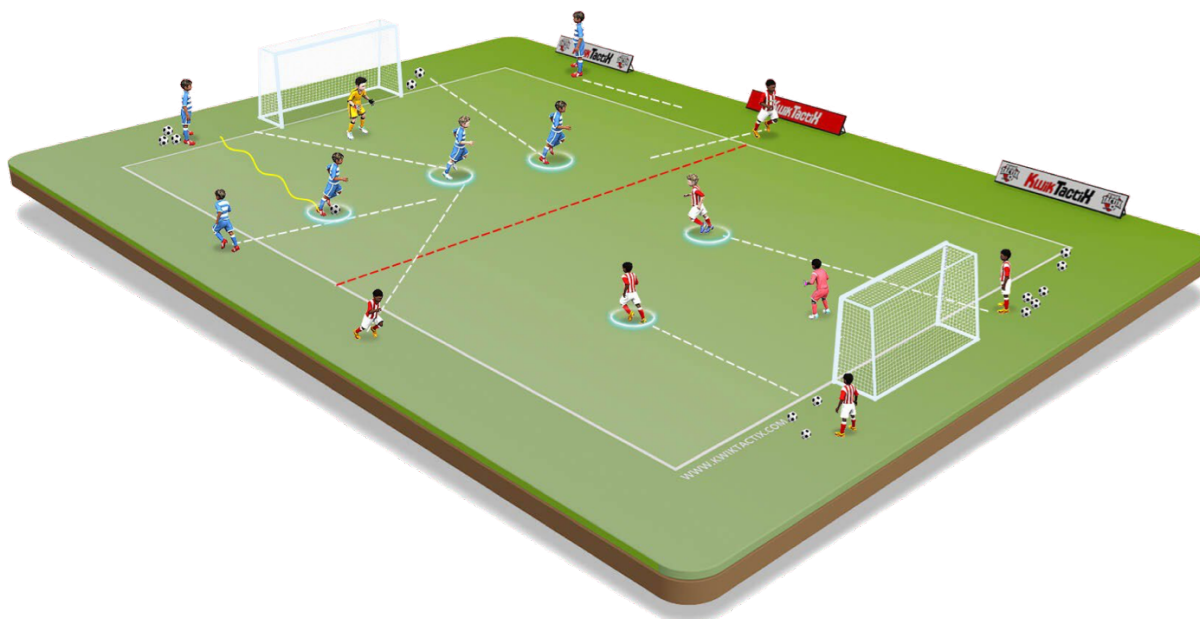
Following the red's attack, both reds leave the field.



1



2



3

# 2v1 RACE TO FINISH

**2v1 race to finish is an excellent drill for players to work on speed of play and going forward quickly when they have a numerical advantage.**

**SET UP** - Create a large grid with a two smaller grids on one side and a full sized goal on the other side. Place mini goals at the ends of each of the two smaller grids as shown in the diagram. Divide players into two even teams. Each team starts at the top of a small grid and sends one player to defend in the opposite small grid. In addition, the teams also assign one player to start at the bottom corner of the small grid with a soccer ball.

**HOW IT WORKS** - On the coach's signal, the first two players from each team starting at the top of the small grids take on the opposing defenders in 2v1 situations. The first team to score on their mini goal is rewarded with an opportunity to attack the large goal.

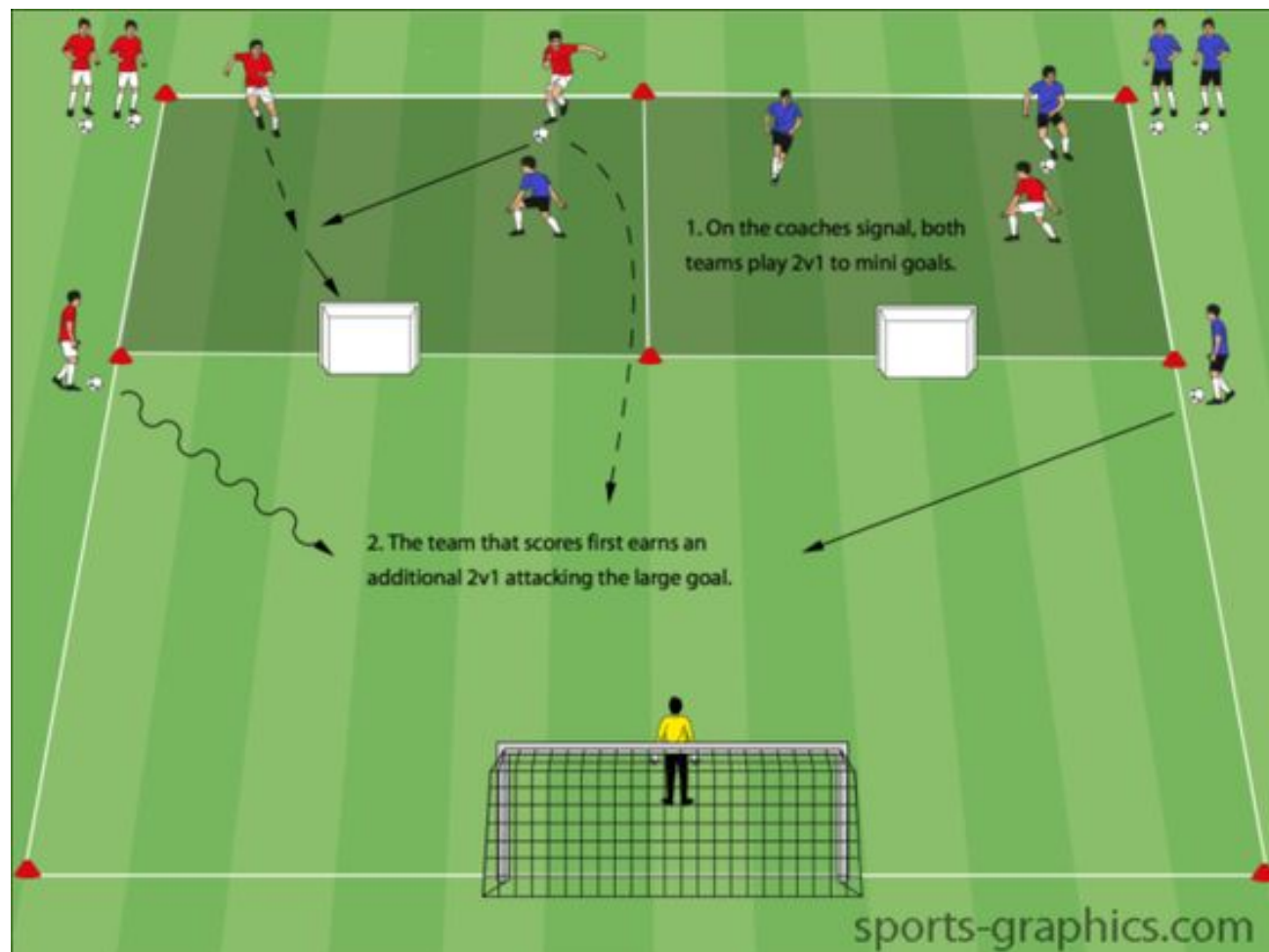
The player who scores on the mini goal teams up with their teammate starting at the bottom of the smaller grid who brings the ball into play. The player who started at the bottom of the small grid on the opposite side (from the team who didn't score) defends the two players from the team that scored who are attacking the large goal.

Teams are awarded one point every time they score on a mini goal and two points every time they are able to score on the large goal.

**COACHING POINTS** - This drill works best when players don't get too close to the large goal when finishing in the second part of this drill. When players get close, it is too easy to beat the keeper. With this in mind, I usually prefer to have about 25-30 yards of space between the end of the small grids and the large goal. Often times, I will also require players to shoot from at least 12-15 yards out. Coaches can use cones to create a line that players must shoot from behind.

Furthermore, players have to attack quickly to succeed in this drill. The two teams are racing in the beginning to see which can score first and earn an attempt on the large goal.

Have players switch lines after every round so that it's not the same players defending and starting at the bottom of the grid every time.



# 1v1 SCORING KNOCKOUT

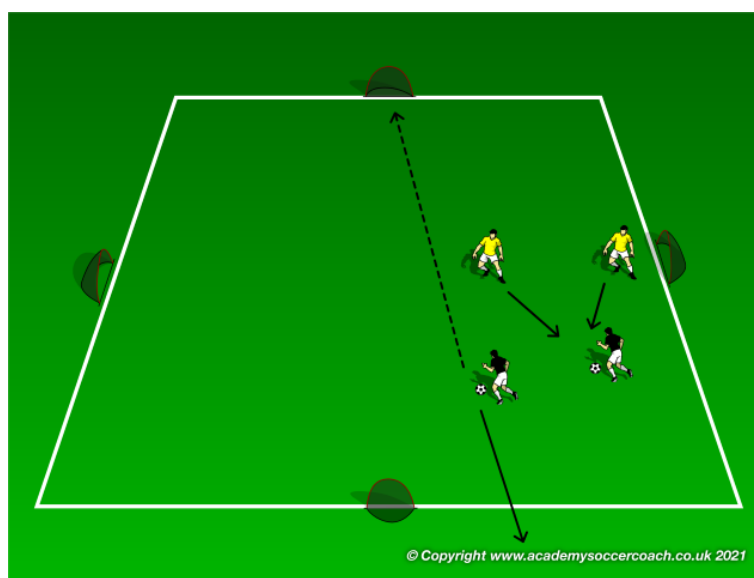
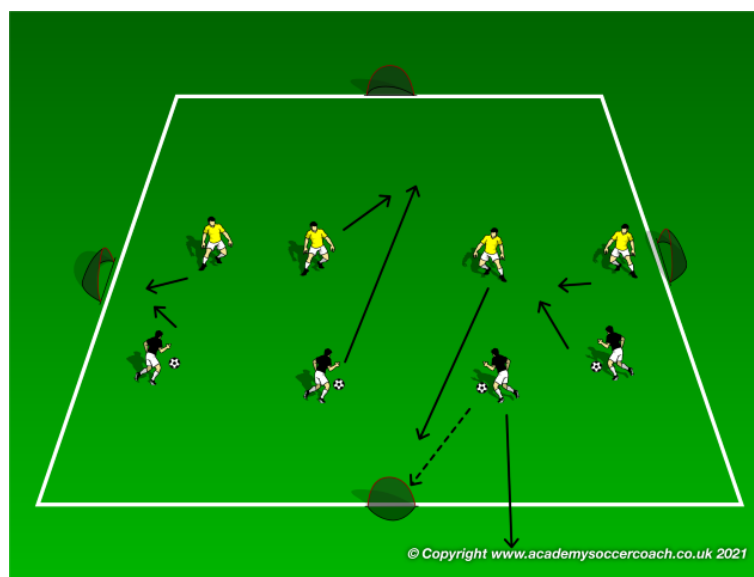
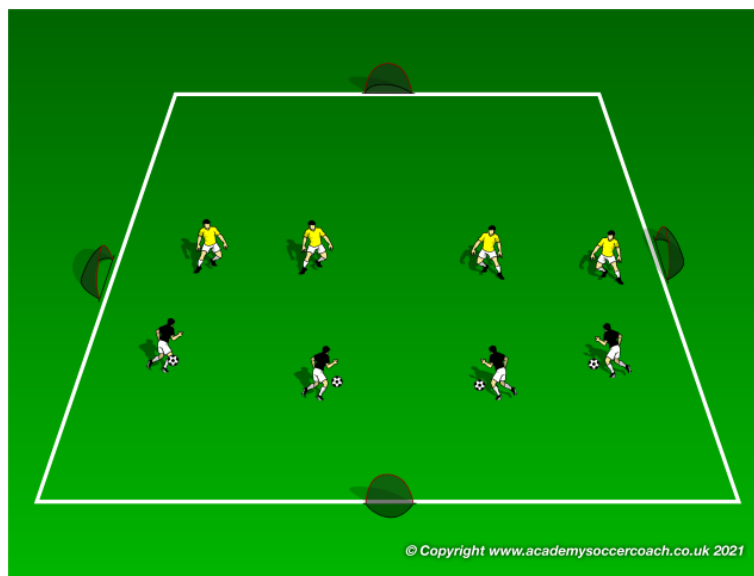
While this is something that can definitely be seen as a technical workout, the high level of physical work players will experience will ensure that your player's in-game physical shape will improve.

In this drill, you will want to create a grid appropriate to the number of players available, taking into account the smaller the grid the more chaotic the game will be and the longer players will be stay "in".

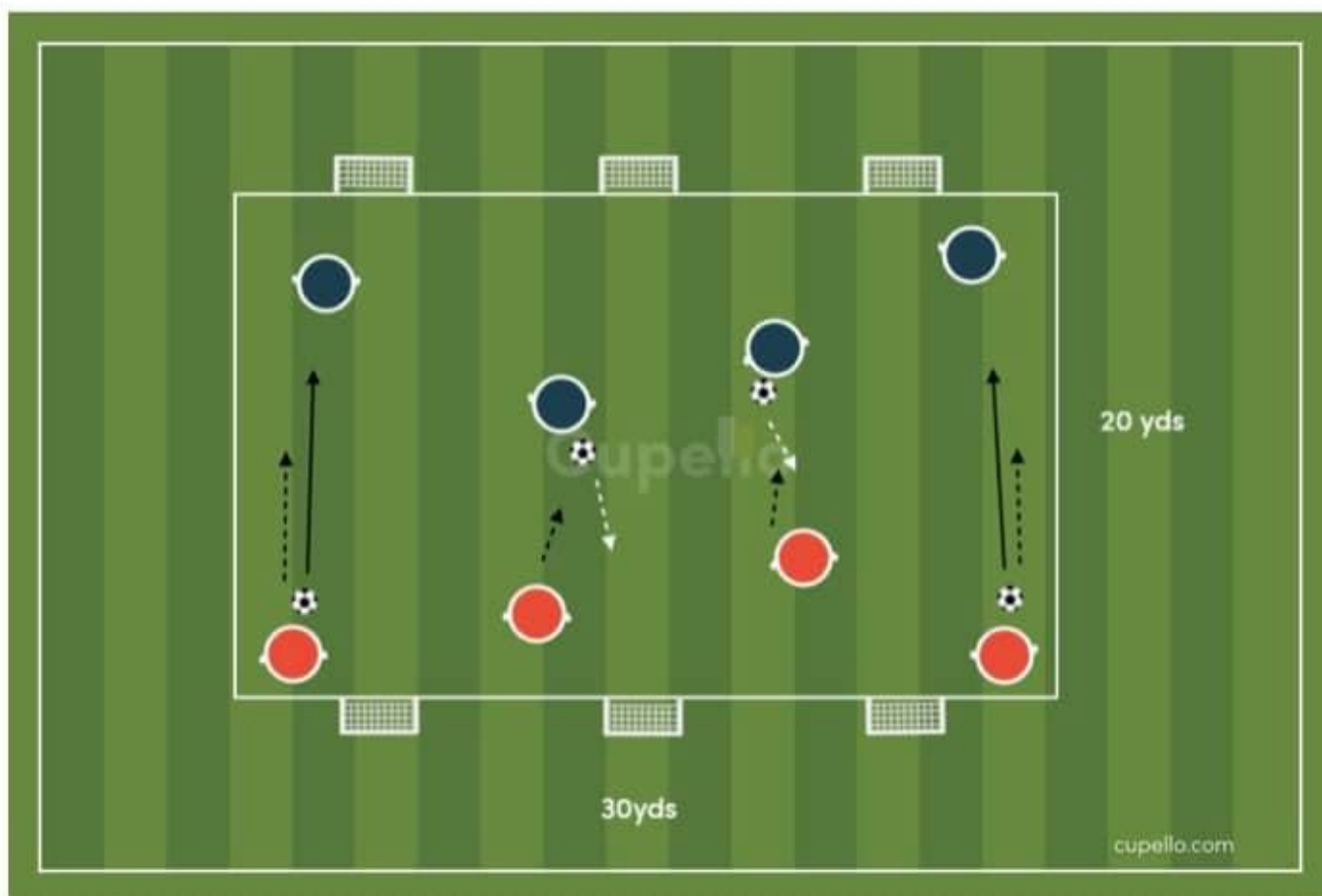
On each side of the grid place a goal (gate or box), the smaller the goal (or area) the higher level of difficulty and conditioning. Each player should be paired up 1v1 with one player on the ball and the other without.

The game starts on the coach's signal and immediately the player with the ball attempts to score on one of the four goals. The defending player attempts to win the ball and then score themselves. Any ball that goes out of bounds is a turnover and the player that did not touch the ball is allowed to dribble into the grid from wherever the ball initially left the grid. If the player scores they then leave the grid and now get recovery time.

The player that was scored on now needs to find a pair and that pair becomes a triad where the same rules apply as before. If one of the players scores though it goes back to a pair with the player that has been in the group the longest starting with the ball. The game ends when there is only one player left in the grid who has not scored.



# 1. 1v1 to Goal



The ability to manipulate the ball in order to dominate 1v1 situations and beat opponents is key at this stage of development.

# 1v1 Attacking and Defending

Create the playing area by making a box 15 x 15 yards with two cones on opposing sides about 5 yards beyond the border of the 15 x 15 box. Divide the team in half, with one group of players assigned as “Attackers” and the other as “Defenders”.

On the defenders side, place two goals on either side of the Defenders line for the Attackers to score in.

## Game Play

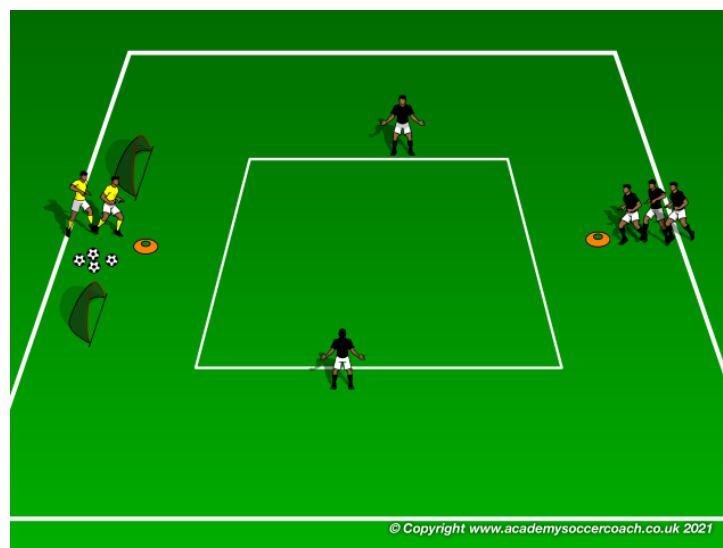
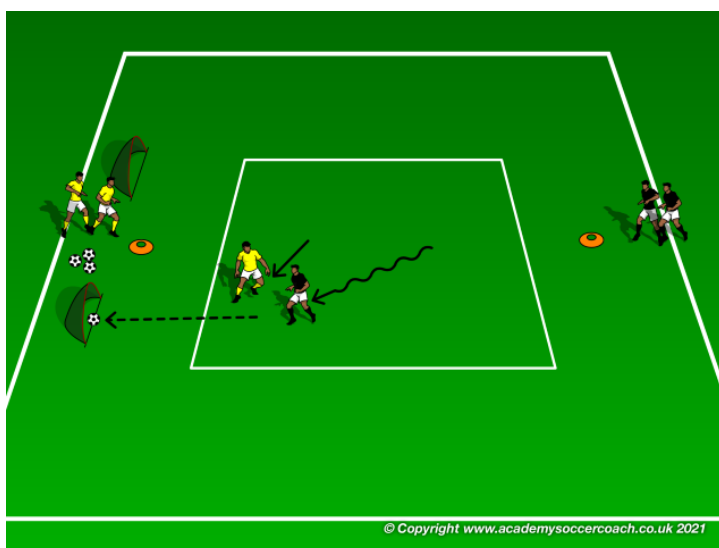
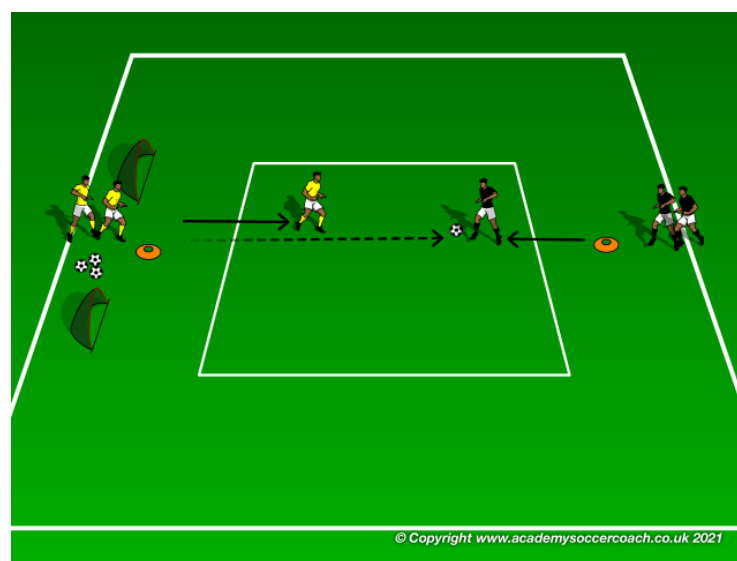
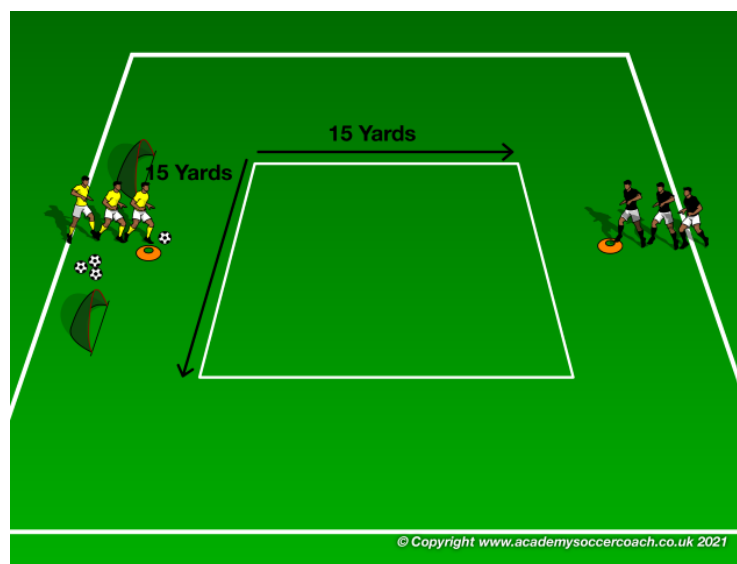
Defenders will start with the balls on their side and begin the turn by passing the ball through the play area to the Attackers across from them and following their pass to meet the Attacker in the box.

The Attacker must receive the ball and begin dribbling into the play area to take on the defender in the play area and score in one of the two goals to win the turn and defenders win the turn by winning the ball and clear it out of the box (or pass to a coach).

The two players who just had a turn, go to the back of the opposite line.

## Variations

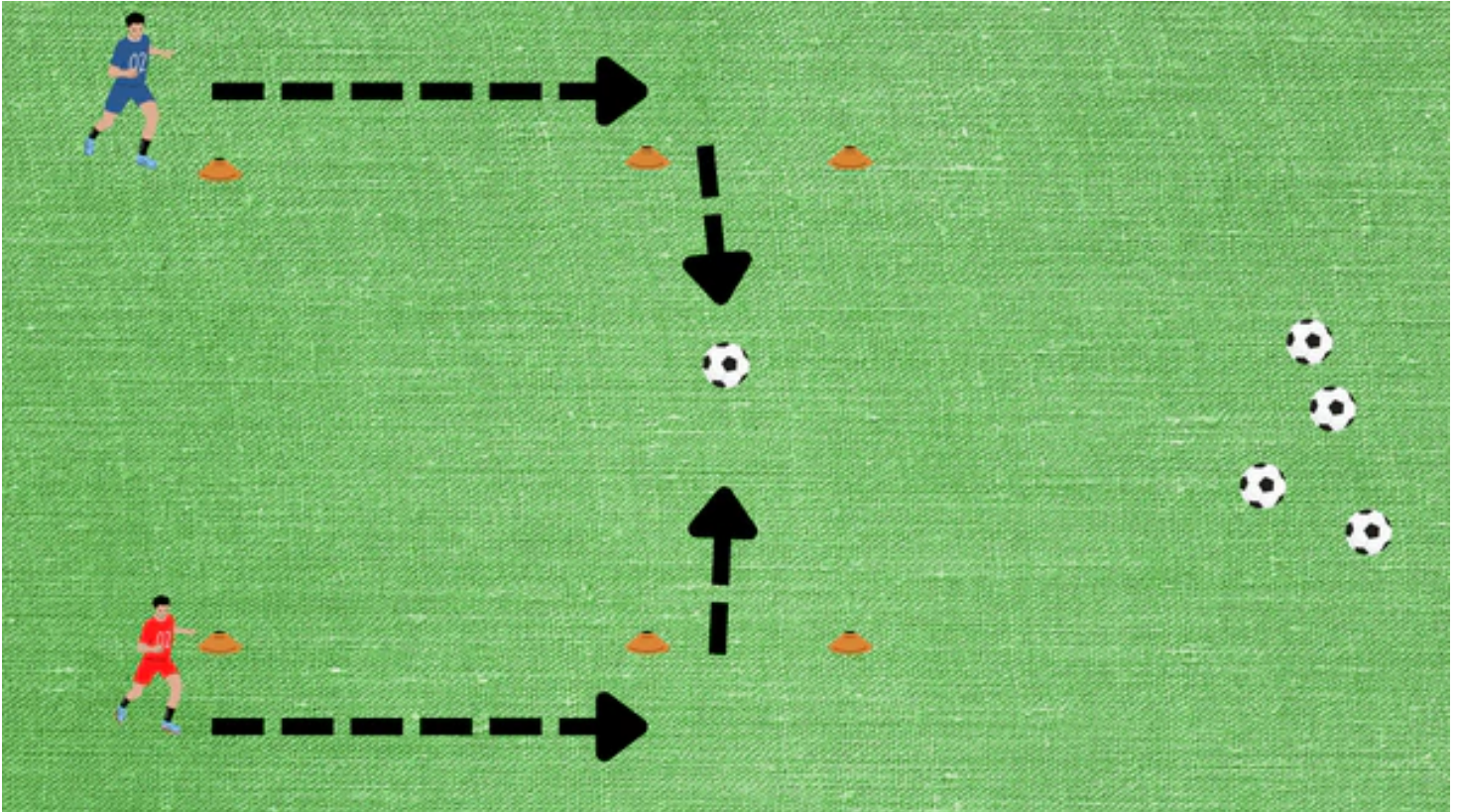
- Use cones in place of the goals.
- Place two players on the adjacent sides of the play area to act as a 1-touch passing option to illustrate the importance of using your teammates. Rotate the side players after each turn.



# THE NUMBERS GAME

Set up a 20 x 25 grid area and at each end, make a goal. Use cones or pug goals for the goals. Set two more cones on the third side of your field so your players can form a lone team.

Give your players a number to pick between one and six, or less depending on the number of players. The players should remember the number, and each player will have a corresponding number on the other team.

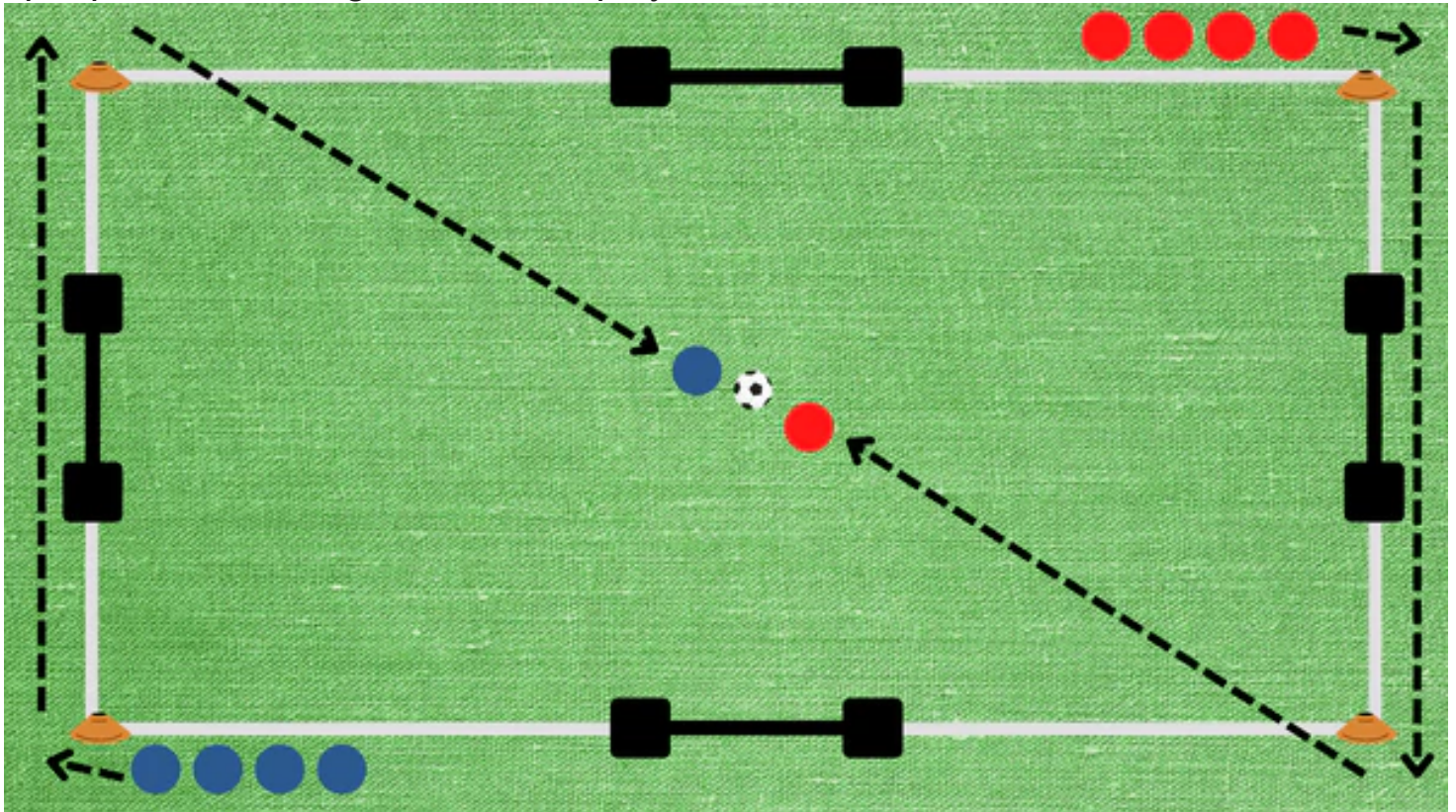


You will call out a number, and each team member with that number will run around the back of their goal before entering the field. You kick a ball into the grid, and your players play a 1v1 game. The players will rejoin the lines, and you call out a new number for the next round.



## 1V1 4 GOAL

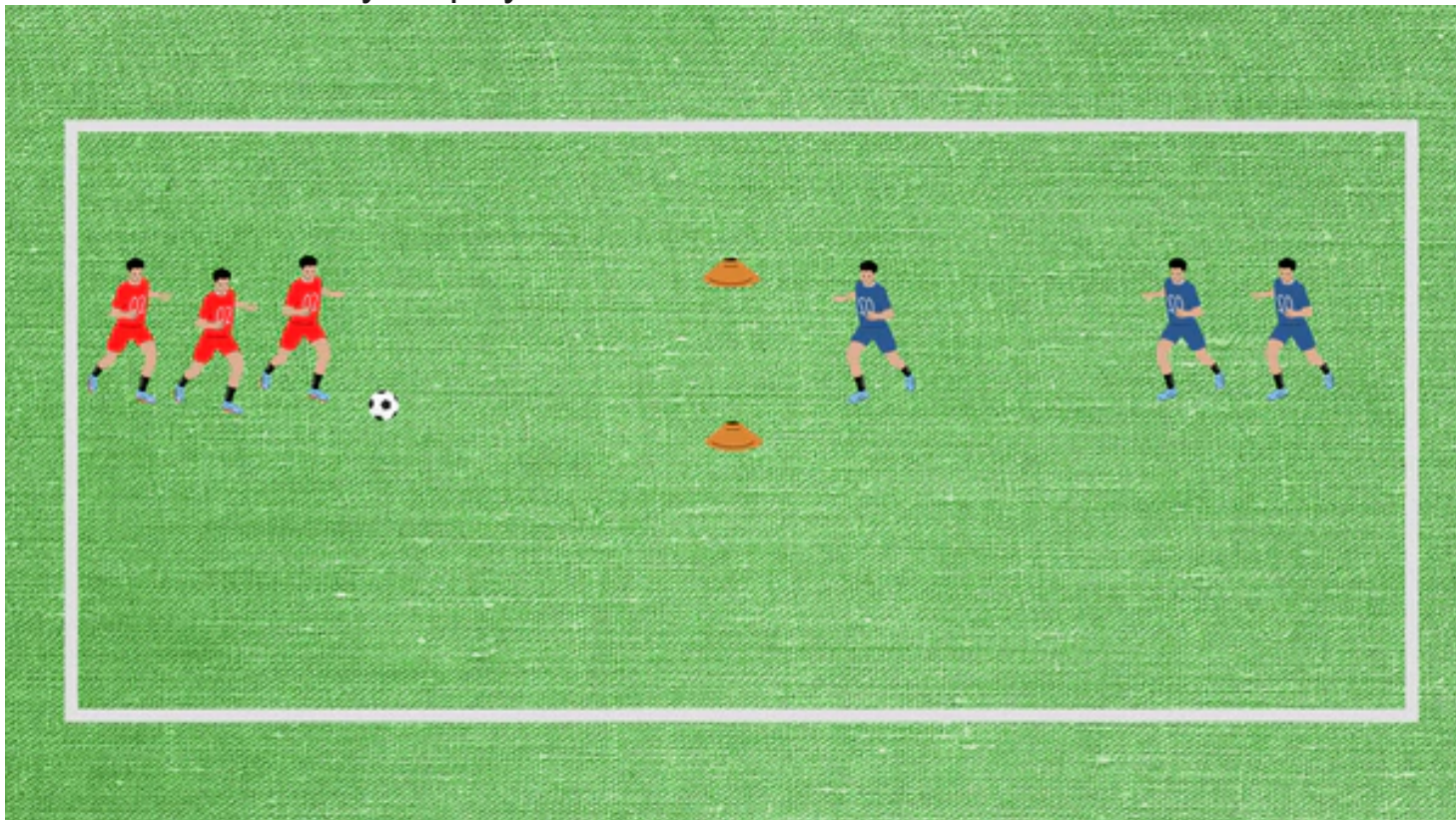
This drill is designed to help young players work on their 1v1 skills, making it suitable to incorporate into [U6 drills](#). It also will prepare your players for 3v2, 3v3, and 2v1. You will need four small goals and five players. Four players will take up a position in the goal, and one player becomes the attacker.



The attacker should attack one goal and try to score. If he scores, he must return to the middle and try again with another goal. They swap roles if the defender tackles the attacker and wins the ball. The attacker is now the defender, and the defender is now the attacker. This is how the 1v1 soccer game continues. Each player with the most goals at the end wins the game.

# MINI GAME

You will need small cones to lay out the pitch dimensions and larger traffic cones to create goals. Mini Game can be set up many times across a large area to accommodate all of your players.

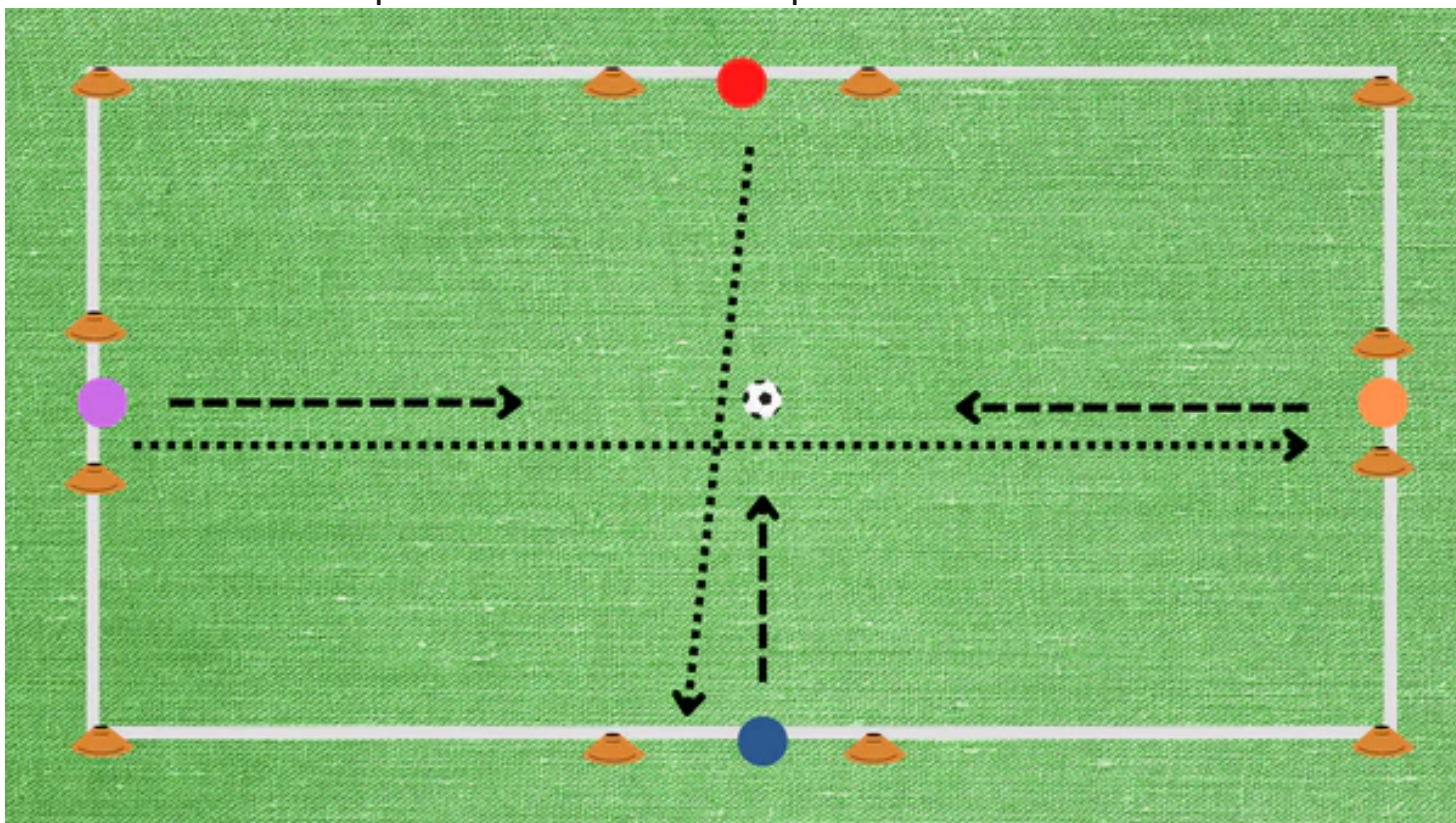


The ball starts with one player who attacks the opposite goal. The attacker should keep the ball close to his feet and dribble the ball through the cones. The defender in the drill should try to win the ball back. If he wins back the ball, he is now the attacker. The original attacker should get into a position to defend against the attack.

## GOALS FROM CHAOS

Set up a 25 x 25-yard area with small cones and make two goals on each side of the square using tall cones.

Your goals should be about two yards long, and there should be eight goals total. Place a small cone between each pair of goals for a quarter of your players to line up behind. You should have your balls ready. Split the players into four groups and have them line up on each side of the square.



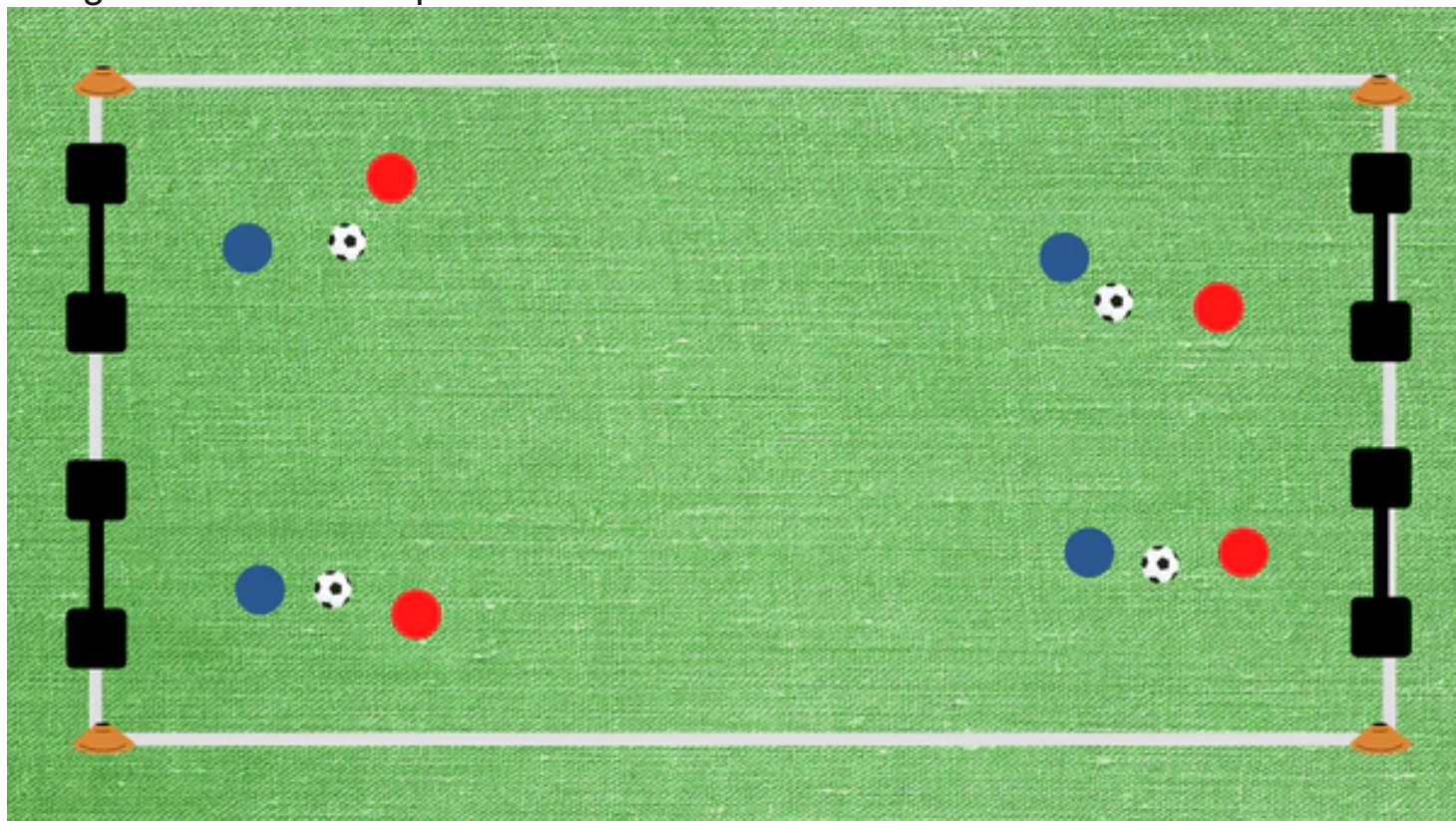
Players in lines 1 and 3 should each have a ball. The first player in line 1 passes the ball to the first player in line 2. Those players play a 1v1 game and attempt to score two goals they face by dribbling their ball past their opponent.

The first players in lines 3 and 4 do the exact same thing. Two games are going on at the same time but in different directions. Once the game is finished, the following players in line start the next 1v1 game.

This drill goes great with our [3-in-1 soccer rebounders](#). Each time someone misses a goal, the ball is returned back into play to prevent players from having to chase it down.

# 1V1 MADNESS

Set up a 35 x 25-yard grid with small cones. Add three small goals on either end of the grid. The goals should be about two yards long. You will need enough balls for there to be one in between every two players. Separate the players into pairs and give a ball to each pair.



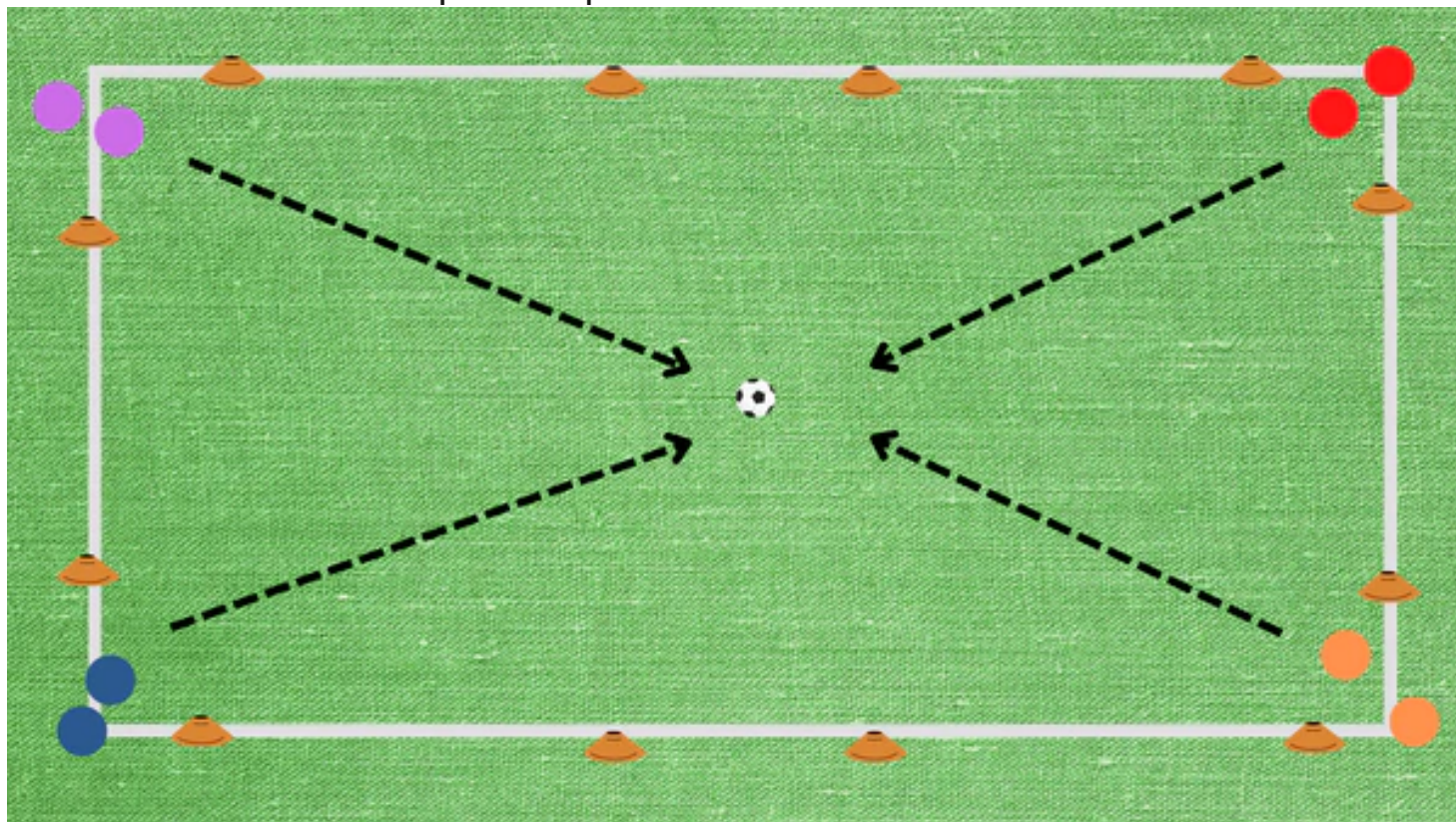
Players should begin at the same time. Each pair must compete for possession of the ball given to them. In each pair, one player will defend the goal on one side of the field, and the second player will defend the goal on the other side. The players will compete for two minutes in pairs and try to outscore their opposing team.

If the ball goes out of bounds, it gets turned over to the non-defending player, and they dribble the ball to continue the game.

# IT'S A KNOCKOUT

Set up a 20x20-yard grid with small cones. Make a small goal, about two yards long, in each corner of the grid with tall cones.

Get your balls ready by your feet to help prepare for the drill. Divide your players into four teams. Each team must stand in a straight line behind one of the goals but outside of the grid. You will play one ball into the grid, and the first player from both lines runs in to compete for possession of the ball.

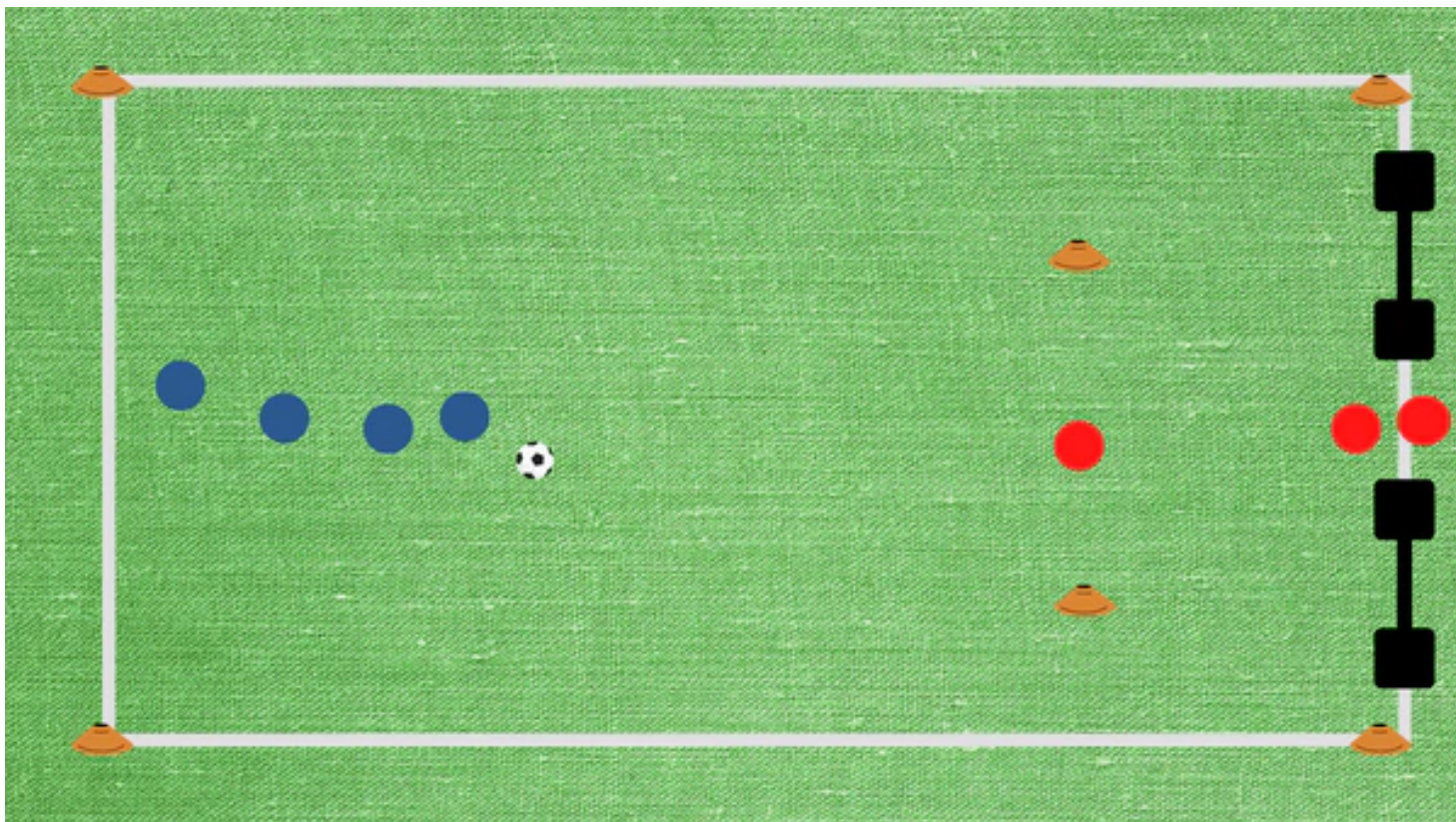


The players play a 1v1v1v1 game with each other and try to score on any of the goals except their own. Once someone's goal is achieved, the player gets eliminated and joins the back of their team's line. You will kick in a new ball, and your remaining three players will play another 1v1v1v1 game.

## IN THE ZONE

You will need two small or four tall cones to act as goal posts. Set up both goals about ten yards apart, facing the same direction.

There should be one cone in between the goals. Place another cone about twenty yards away from the goals and then a line of small cones about five yards from the goals to make an end zone. Divide the players into two groups, the defenders and the attackers.



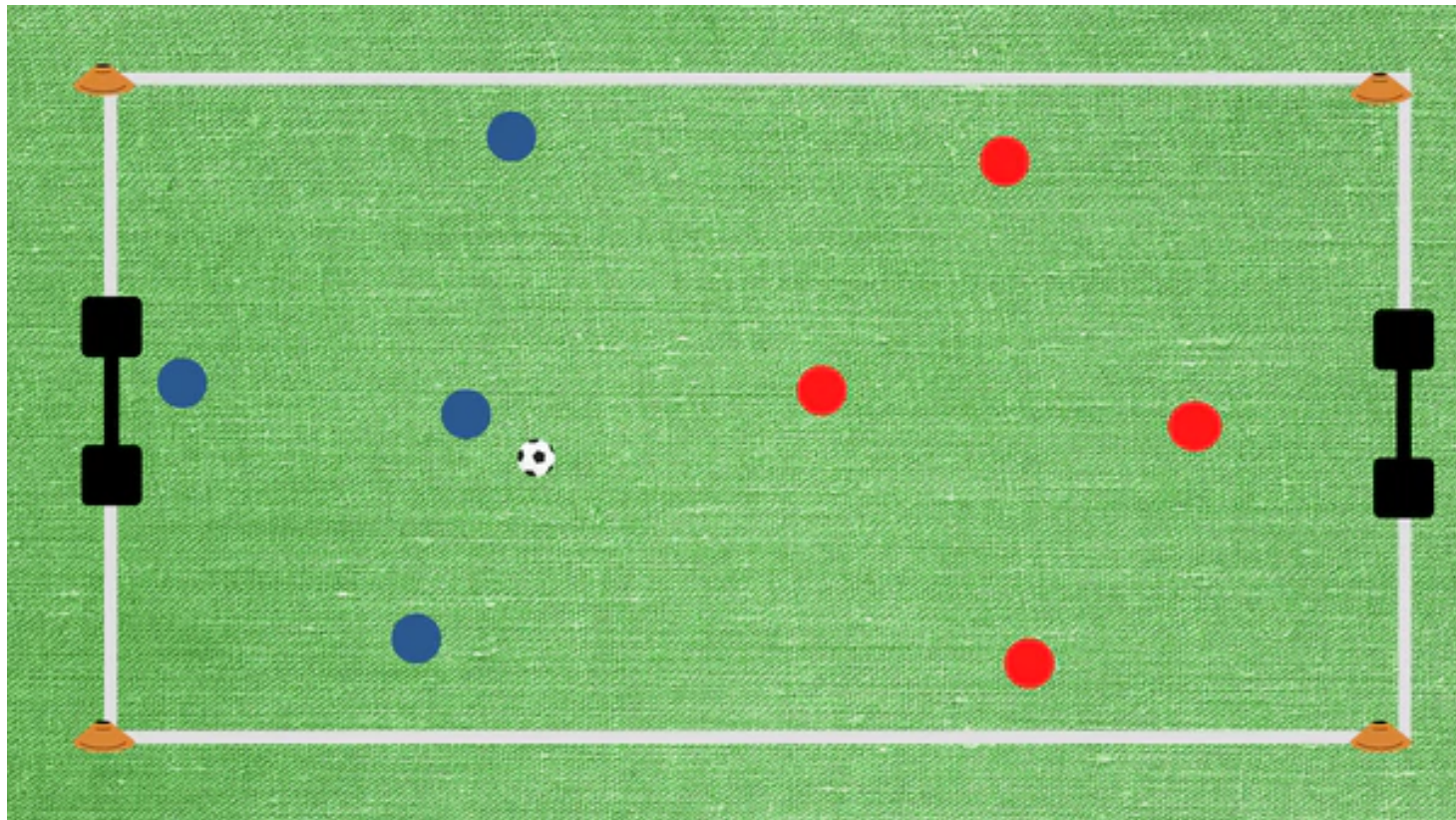
The defenders should line up behind the cone between the goals, and the attackers should line up behind the cone at the other end. Each attacker should have a ball. When you whistle, the attacker should advance the ball, and the defender should rush to stop them.

The attacker should take the ball past the defender into the end zone and try to score in either of the goals. The defender should prevent the attacker from entering the end zone and gaining the ball's possession.

# ATTACK AND DEFEND

Your teams will take turns attacking and defending during this one on one soccer drill. When one team attacks the goal, the other team should protect it.

The defending team becomes the attackers during the next go, and the original attackers will be the defenders.

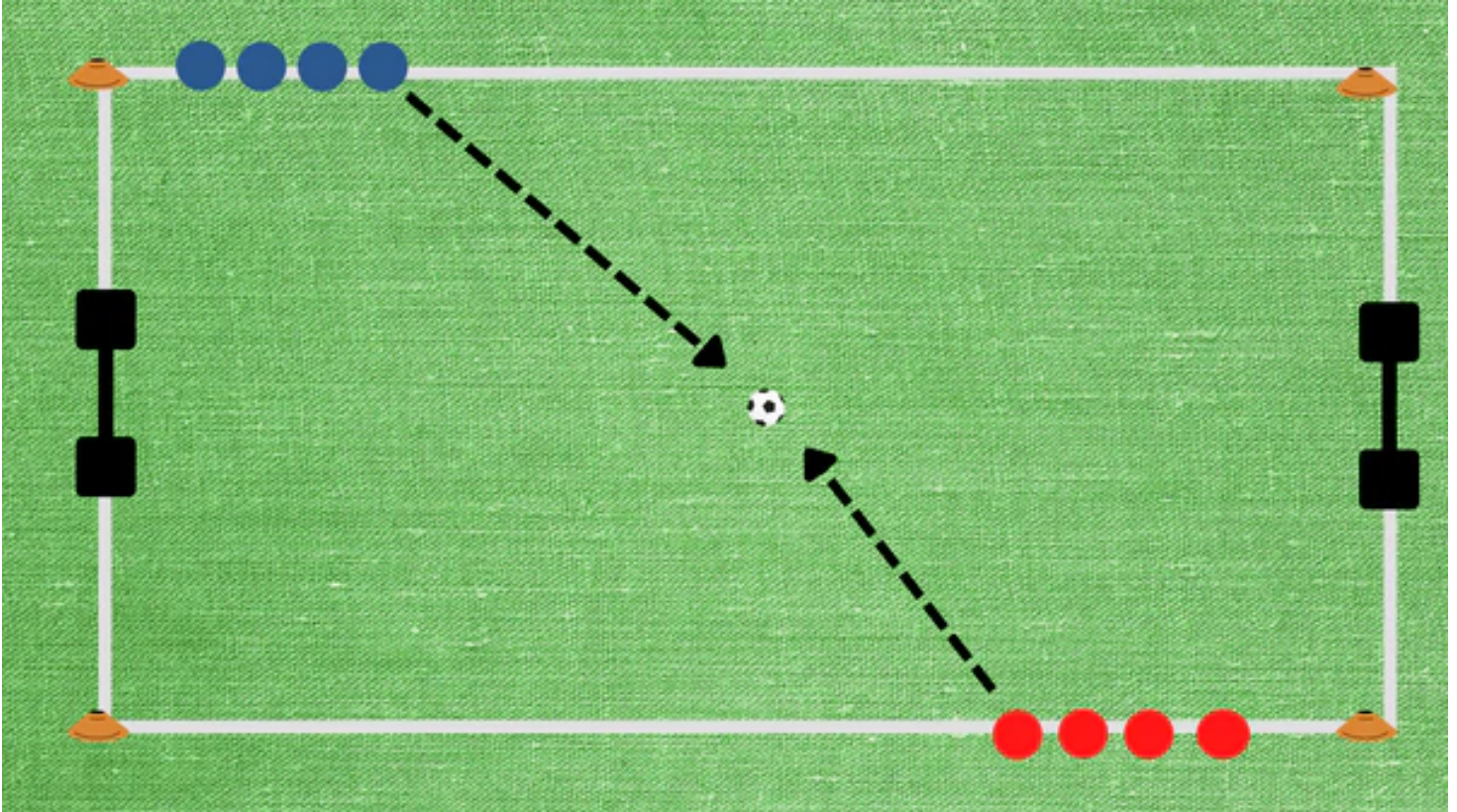


Try to use an 18-yard field for this drill to ensure our players have enough space. Set up two players on either side of the goal and two out of the area. This drill is excellent for practicing goalkeeping training with your players.

Player 1 passes the ball to player 2. Player 1 runs out of space and defends 1v1. When a goal has been scored, player 4 gives another ball to player 1. Player 3 will close down the space and stop player 1 from scoring.

# 1V1 PRACTICE

This 1v1 soccer drill consists of two teams and two goals with a ball in the middle of the goal as the target. You can add in goalkeepers instead if you choose. Your teams should alternate attack and defend in a 1v1 game. After attacking, the attacker should quickly turn to defend.

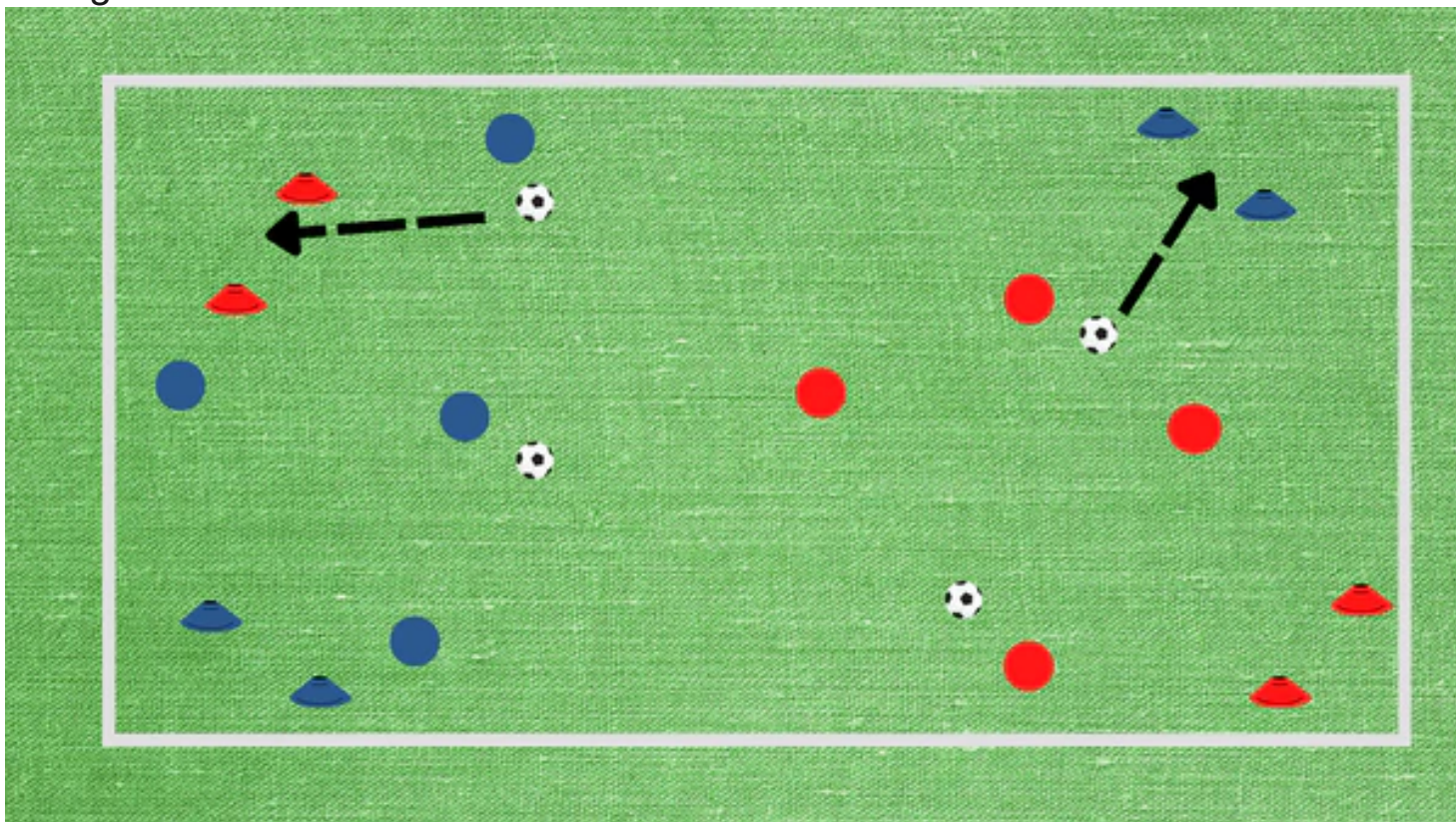


The first team to meet the target ten times is the winner. For this drill to run smoothly, keep the ball close to your feet, alternate the goals you attack, and increase the intensity of the attacking play. You can also add boxed areas to make the spaces smaller in which each player attacks and defends.



# ULTIMATE TRANSITION

You will need four gates, two red and two blue. You should try to match the color of the gates with the teams to make things more simple and more competitive for your teams. The blue player should dribble into the area and attack one of the blue gates.



The red player should close the space down and quickly stop the attacker. If the red player wins the ball, they should attack while the blue player defends. The last team that makes a goal is the next team to attack. The ball is “dead” if it leaves the drill area.

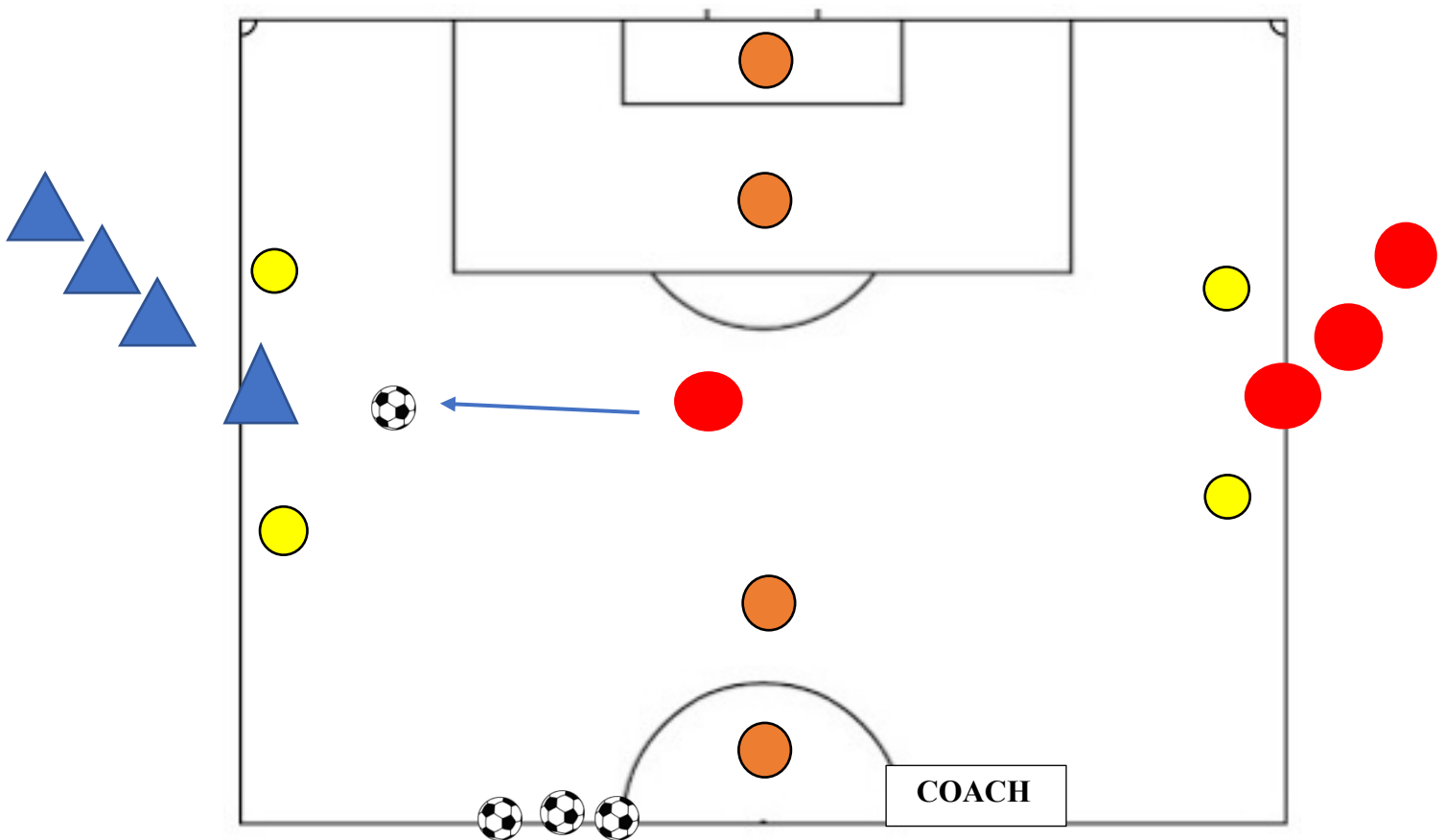
When attacking, your players should keep the ball close, exploit the space, use disguise, use a turn of pace to beat the defender, and stay sharp. When defending, the players should jockey back while keeping an eye on the ball, shut the space down quickly, and push the attacker wide.

# FLUENT 1v1

Fluent 1v1 battles where the dribbler must outwit the defender and make it through one of two gates. Encourage creativity with the ball.

After dribbling through one of the gates, the Dribbler/ Attacker passes the ball to the receiver in the other end.

At this point the receiver becomes the Dribbler/ Attacker, and the other player becomes the defender.

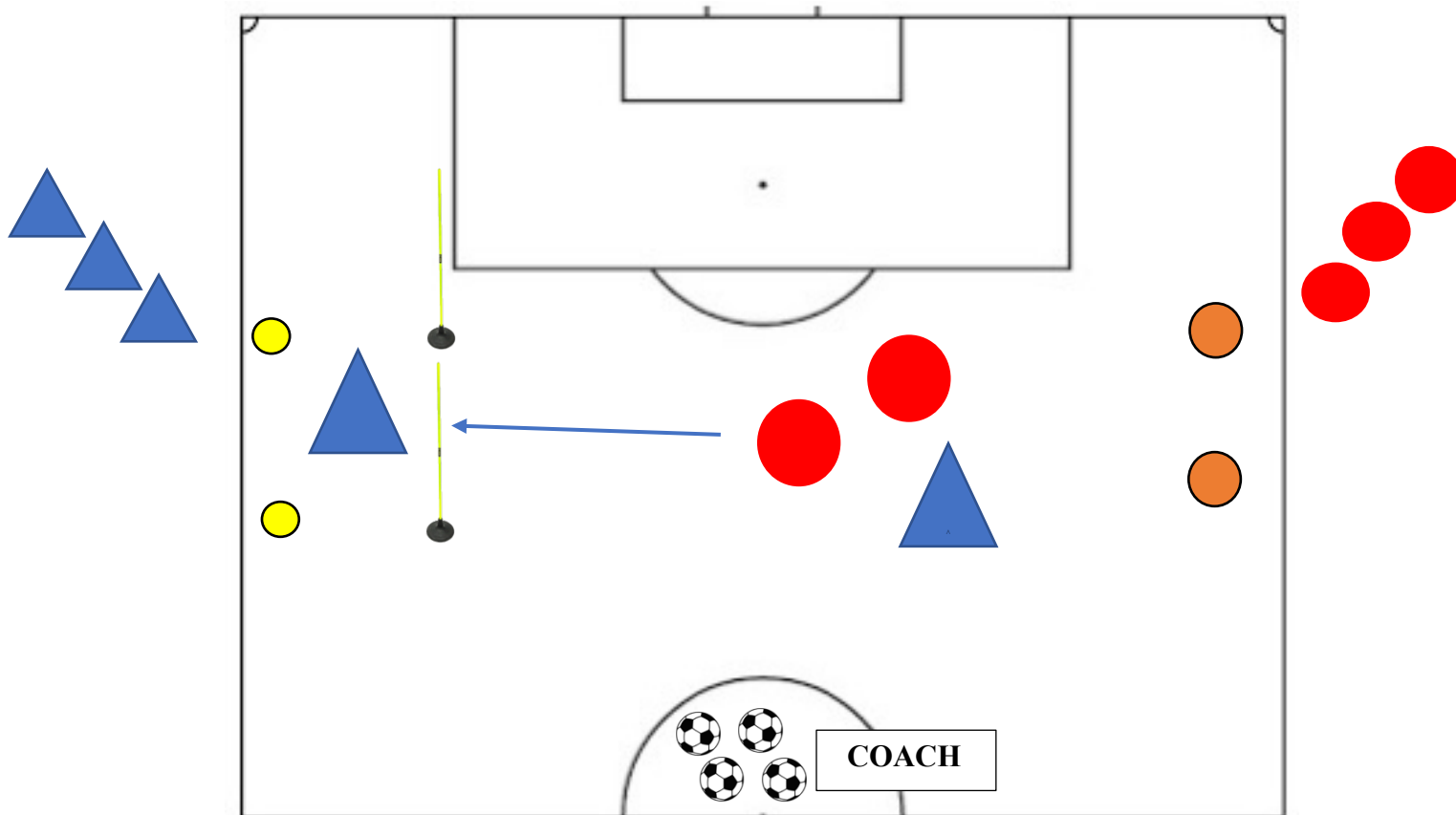


# 2v2 Advantage

This variation momentarily puts the offense at a “2v1” advantage. It’s up to them to capitalize.

1. Defender passes ball on the ground between the sticks (cones) to the offensive player.
2. Attacker goes around either stick to begin the attack.
3. Defender goes around the opposite stick to press.

**Increase difficulty:** Attacker goes around the opposite stick of the defender.

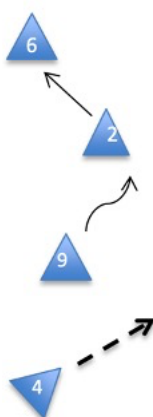


## DIAGRAMMING KEY & SYMBOLS:

PLAYERS: Team your training  
(Functional Exercises Use Positional Numbering)



PLAYERS: Opposition  
(Functional Exercises Use Positional Numbering)

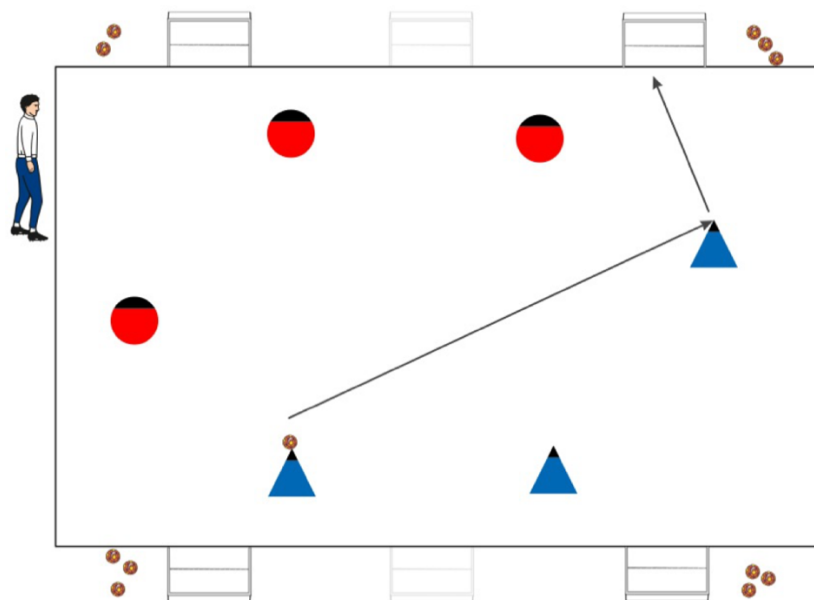


PASSES represented using thin lines with a head. The length to the arrow-head is an indication of the distance. The arrow-head represents the end point of the pass. For accuracy, the angle and length should be drawn in proportion to the field diagram in which they are placed.

DRIBBLING or RUNNING WITH THE BALL is represented using squiggled line with an arrow-head.

PLAYER MOVEMENT or RUNNING WITHOUT THE BALL represented using dashed line with an arrow-head. Angle of the point of triangle represents angle of approach by the player

# 4 Goal Game (FUNiño) - 6 Goal Game



## Attacking Principles

- Individual attacking
- Passing and Receiving Possession
- When to shoot, dribble or pass

## Objective

Improve players ability to use Mobility to Support and Penetrate.

Manipulate the placement of the cones to stimulate different reactions by the players.

1. Place goals or gates 1- 2 yards onto the field; players score by dribbling through the gates before the ball leaves the pitch.
2. Place goals or gates 1- 2 yards onto the field, players score by dribbling around and back through the gates to score
3. Place goals or gates 1- 2 yards onto the field; players score by passing the ball to a teammate on the other side of the gates.

## Description:

30x40 yard grid.

2 (3) small goals (or gates) on each end line.

Play 3v3.

Balls start from behind each goal or where it exits the field.

Progression: Play breakout style

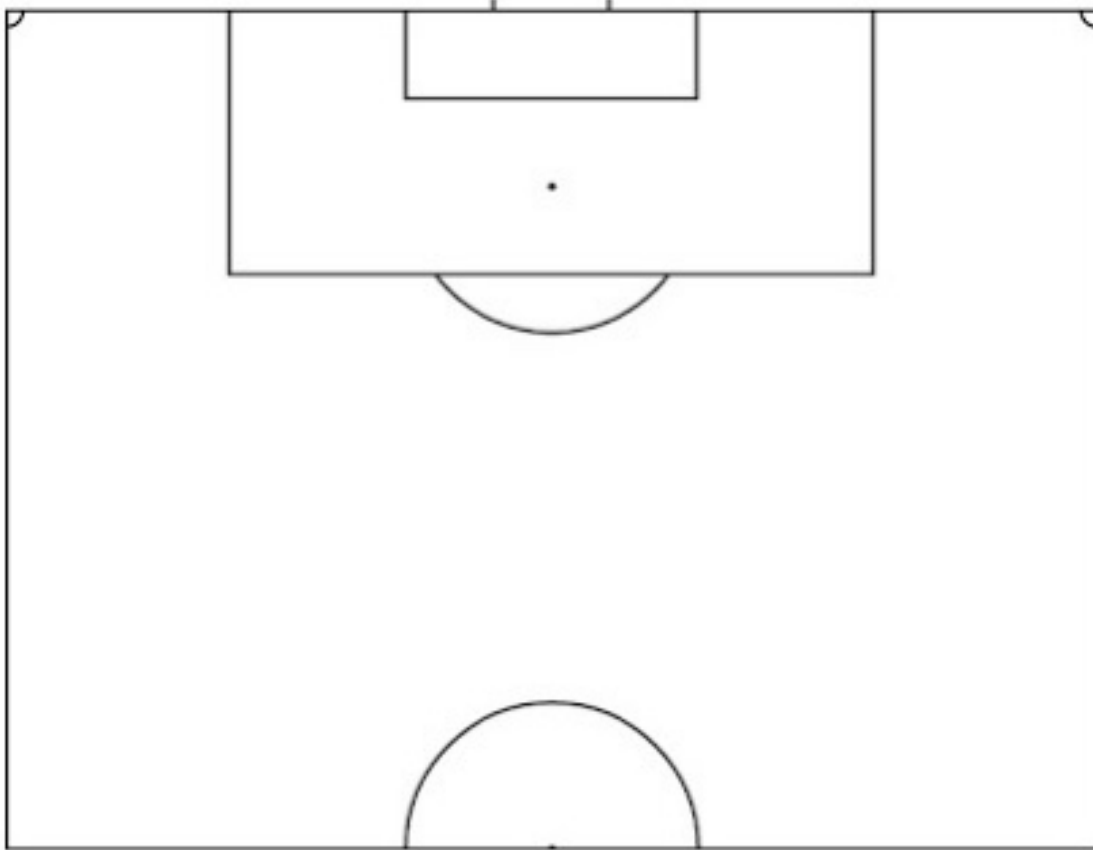
## Key Points:

Create a triangle.

Use Mobility to support player in possession.

Use Mobility to penetrate in behind the opponents.

Make good decisions – possess, penetrate, or shoot!

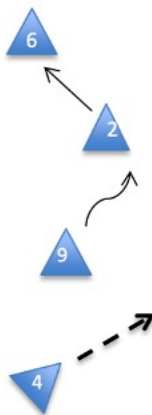


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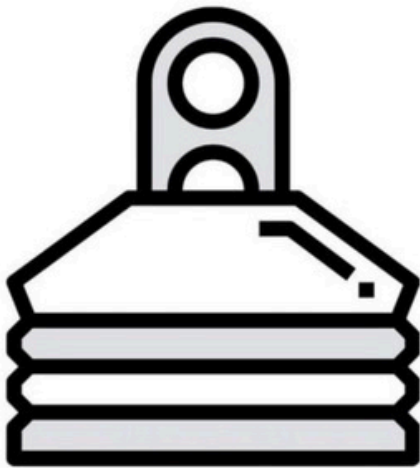


**PASSES** represented using **thin lines** with a head. The **length** to the arrow-head is an indication of the **distance**. The arrow-head represents the end point of the pass. **For accuracy, the angle and length should be drawn in proportion to the field diagram in which they are placed.**

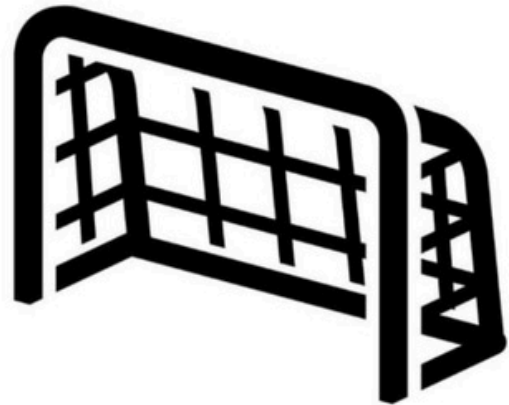
**DRIBBLING or RUNNING WITH THE BALL** is represented using **squiggled line** with an arrow-head.

**PLAYER MOVEMENT or RUNNING WITHOUT THE BALL** represented using **dashed line** with an arrow-head. **Angle of the point of triangle represents angle of approach by the player**

# **WOULD YOU RATHER...**



**Players running around  
cones and standing in  
a line waiting to go**



**Players fully engaged  
and problem solving  
with mini games**

# DECISION-MAKING

## *The quick decisions your players make*

*Some think that football (soccer) is played with feet. They are the same people who think that chess is played with their hands.*

Often when discussing the best soccer players, intelligence is often a key defining factor of how good the best players really are. **The intelligence of good players allows them to make quick and smart decisions that help them and the team during the match.** These decisions define the outcome of goal scoring chances, defensive opportunities and the entire outcome of the match.

The ability to make tackles, blocks, saves, passes and score goals means nothing without knowing **when**, **where** and **how** is best to do so. **Decision-making** is key to all positions and roles on a soccer pitch.



## **Let the kids play!**

**The sooner they learn to make decisions on their own,  
the sooner their development begins!**

