

# **USSF “F” LICENSE FIELD COMPONENT MANUAL**



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## 3.5 hour Field Component for USSF F License

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## Philosophy for U6-U9 coaches:

### 1. Player Development First

- From USSF's "Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in the United States", page 8): "Encourage your players to be creative... Coaches should avoid the impulse to "coach" their players from "play to play" in order to help them win the match. Coaches should not be telling their young players to "pass rather than dribble," to "hold their positions" or to "never" do something (like pass or dribble in front of their own goal)". Mistakes are an important part of the learning process, and players should be allowed to make them without fear of reprimand.

### 2. Demonstrate the skill rather than providing a long-winded verbal explanation.

- Use a field player if they show good technique, and boost their confidence
- Say "Can you do it like this", then demonstrate the skill

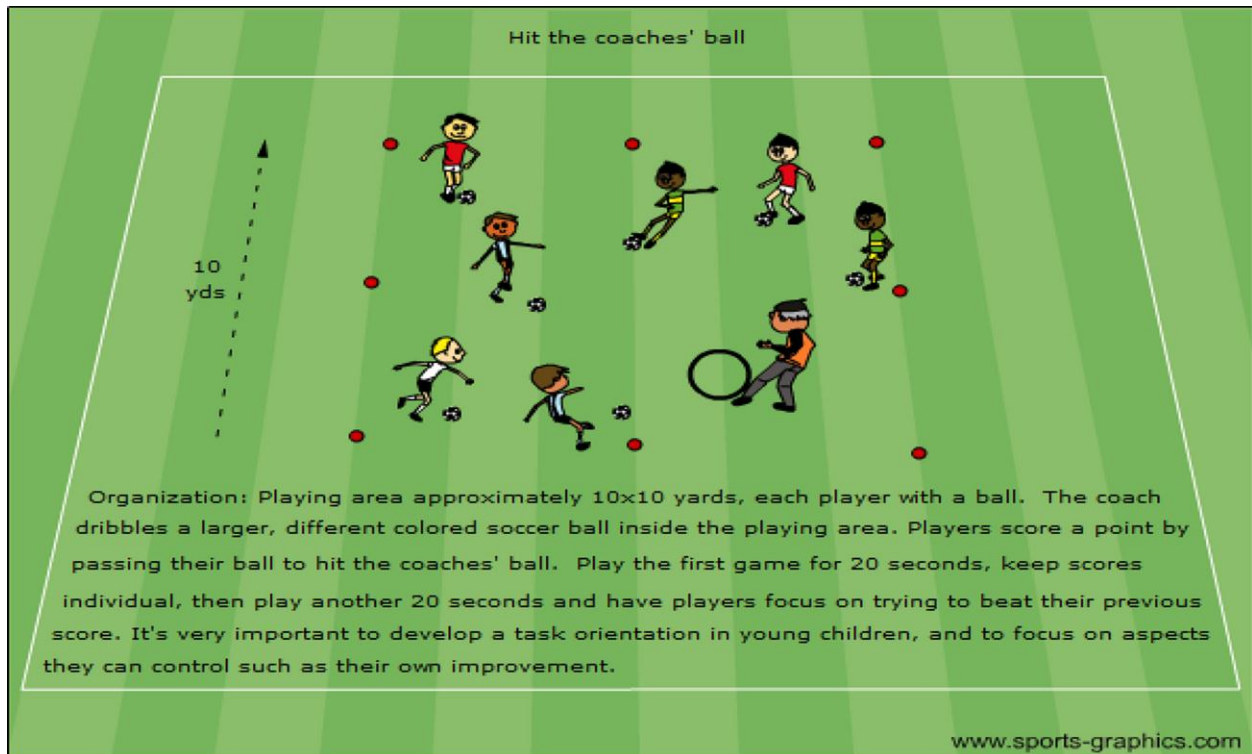
### 3. Promote a 'Growth Mindset' and not a 'Fixed Mindset' (read Dr. Dweck's 'Mindset' for further information). Mistakes are opportunities to learn and grow, we learn more when we fall short.

- Dweck's research reveals there are significant benefits if you believe that your ability comes from effort and practice (Growth Mindset). However, there are debilitating consequences to the belief that talent is innate, and it doesn't change very much (Fixed Mindset). When a 'Fixed Mindset' hits a hurdle (i.e. cut from a team) they believe it's because they have insufficient talent, so they are more likely to quit the sport. The 'Growth Mindset' athlete says "it just needs more effort or a different strategy", and thus retains confidence and motivation. A 'Fixed Mindset' person is also: Less coachable, complains when taken out of their comfort zone, looks down on effort, is prone to cheating and creates excuses.
- How to encourage a 'Growth Mindset': When your team or the individual succeeds explain the effort related reasons why, for example: "Suzie and Sammy got wide early to create space for Emily". When your team falls short point to a lack of effort, for example: "Can our forwards work harder to pressure their defenders?"

### 4. Promote a task orientation by asking players to focus on doing better than their previous best score. If we encourage youngsters to focus on beating others (ego orientation) it forces them to concentrate on things they cannot control. This is likely to increase anxiety and reduce confidence, however, when we teach kids to focus on effort and self-improvement it enhances confidence and motivation.

### 5. The on-field philosophy is 'let the game be the teacher'. Additionally, no lines, no laps, no lectures (let them play)

1) U6-U8: Hit the coaches' ball



The diagram shows a 10x10 yard playing area on a green field. A coach is positioned in the lower right, holding a large orange ball. Ten children are scattered across the field, each with a small black and white soccer ball. A dashed arrow on the left indicates the 10-yard width. The title 'Hit the coaches' ball' is at the top.

Organization: Playing area approximately 10x10 yards, each player with a ball. The coach dribbles a larger, different colored soccer ball inside the playing area. Players score a point by passing their ball to hit the coaches' ball. Play the first game for 20 seconds, keep scores individual, then play another 20 seconds and have players focus on trying to beat their previous score. It's very important to develop a task orientation in young children, and to focus on aspects they can control such as their own improvement.

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U6-U8: Ghostbusters 1 – Play this game without a ball first, for player familiarity.

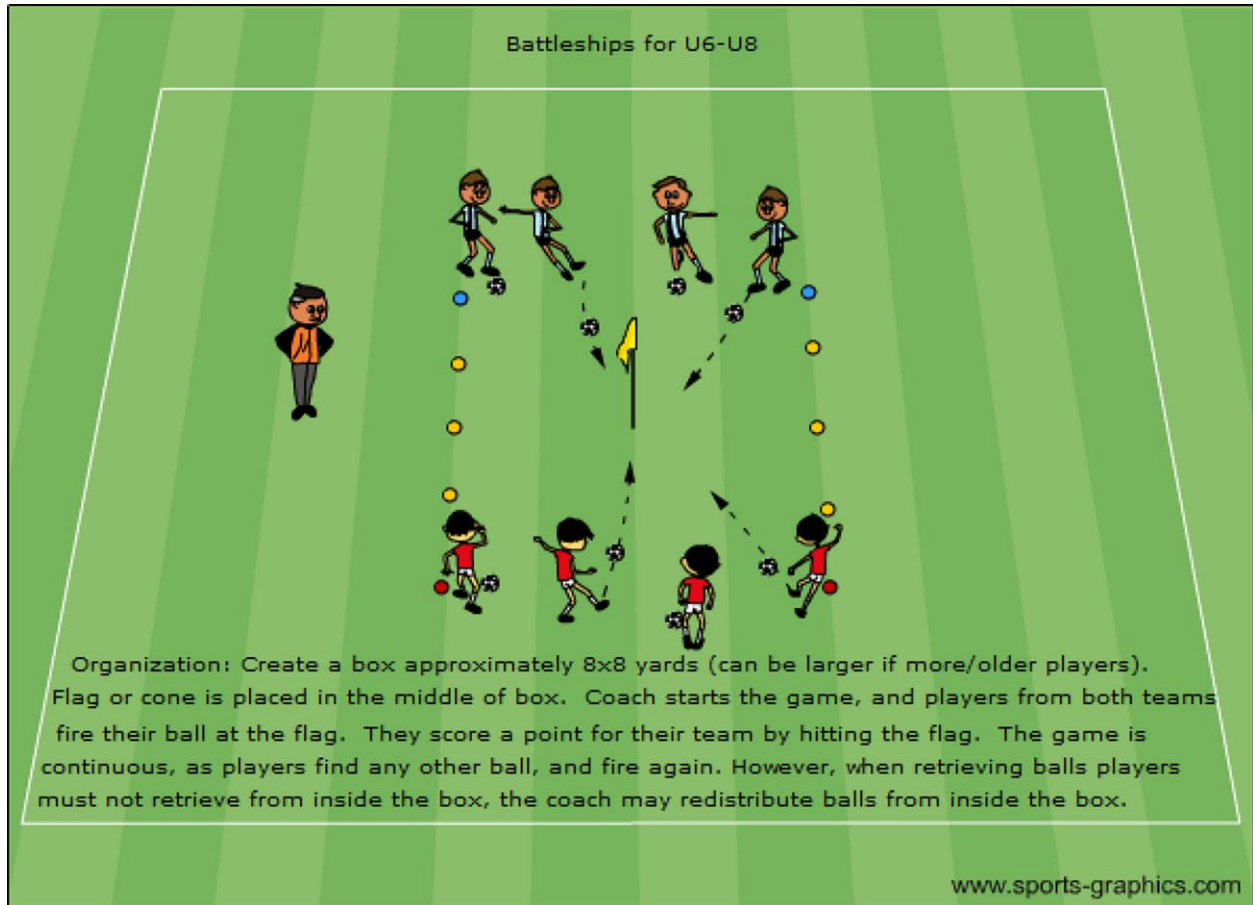


The diagram shows a 10x10 yard playing area on a green field. A coach is in the lower right, holding two yellow pinnies. Ten children are scattered across the field, each with a small black and white soccer ball. A dashed arrow at the top indicates the 10-yard width. Two yellow corner flags are on the left and right sides. The title 'Ghostbusters U6-U8 (Dribbling)' is at the top.

Organization: Playing area approximately 10x10 yards. The coach has 2 pinnies, one in each hand, and he/she attempts to tag the dribblers with either pinnie. The dribblers must keep the ball close, and within the playing area. If they are tagged, or dribble out of bounds, they must dribble their ball around either corner flag (or use a different colored cone) and rejoin the game.

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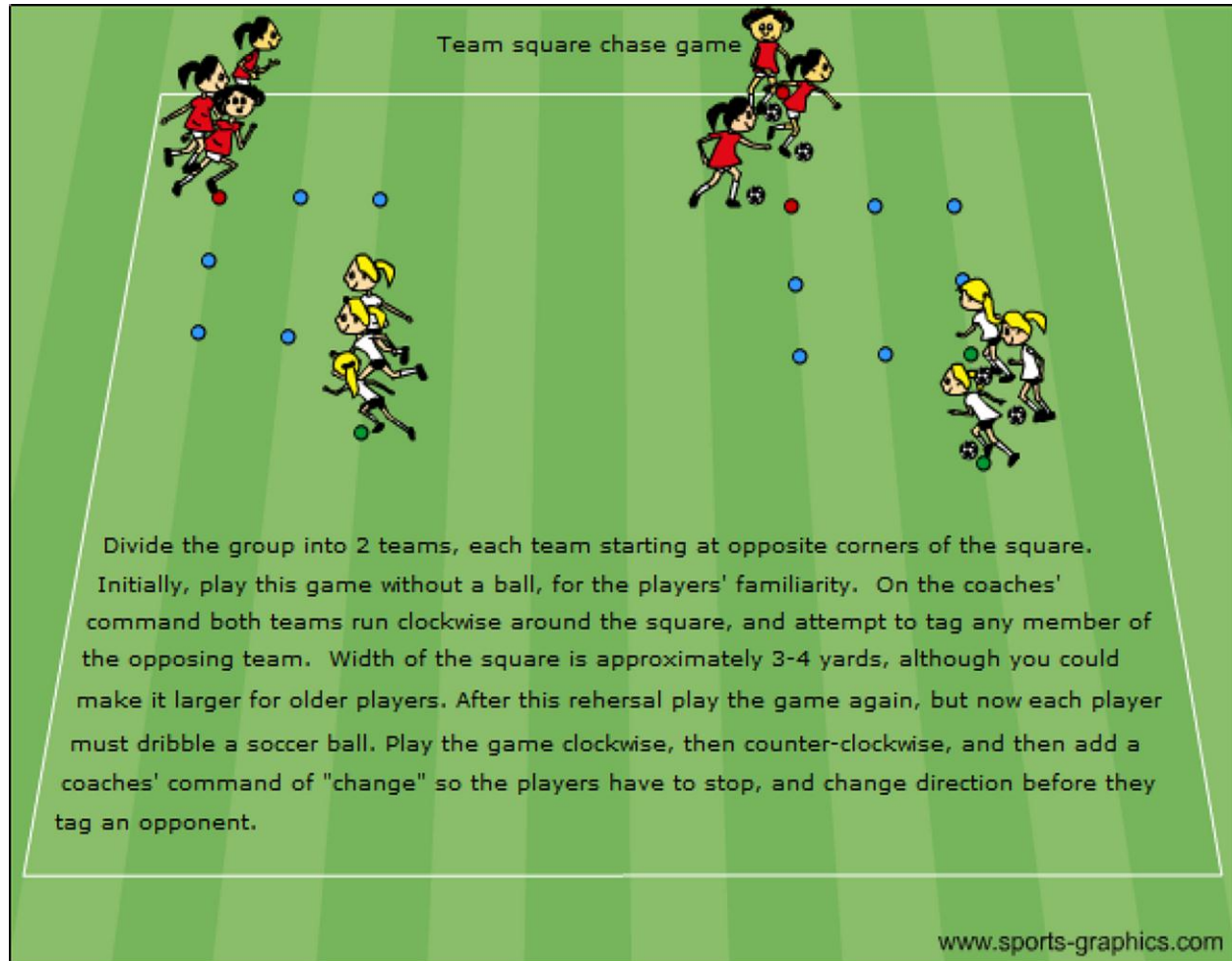
## U6-U8: Battleships 1



### Coaching Points:

Avoid excessive instruction as this confuses young players. Better to say “can you do it like this” and then demonstrate the short passing technique. Better still, if a young player has good technique, say “watch Suzie, that’s an example of very good technique”.

## U6-U8: Team square chase game



It's important to switch the direction of the dribble as this will allow players to use the inside and outside of their feet when changing direction.

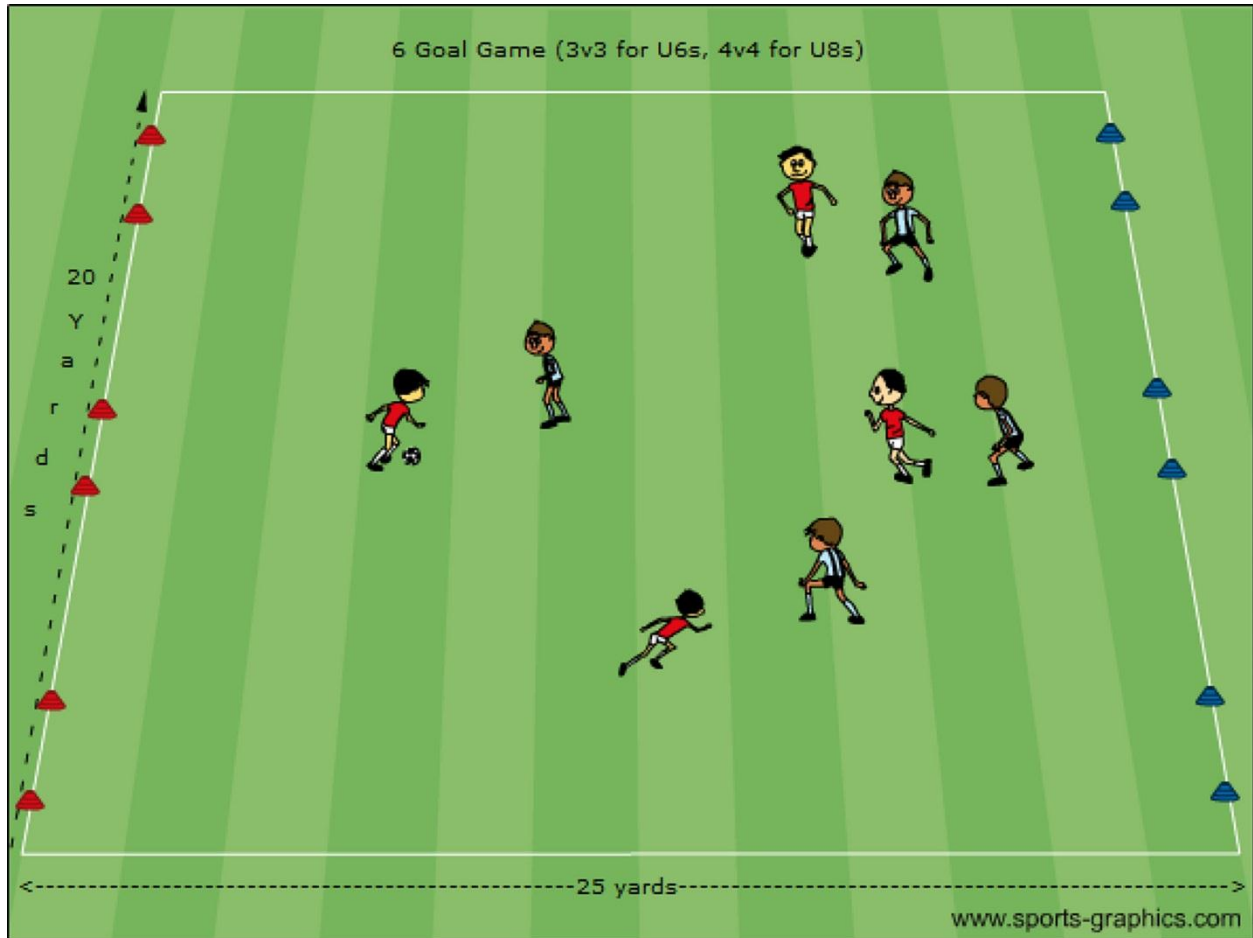
Coaching Point(s): This activity also focusses on the players' ability to conduct turns (changing direction with the ball). Show the players how to conduct an inside hook turn and an outside hook turn. For an example, watch:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0UpPaoiYOjE>

and

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tptS44T2\\_Lc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tptS44T2_Lc)

## U6-U8: 6 goal game



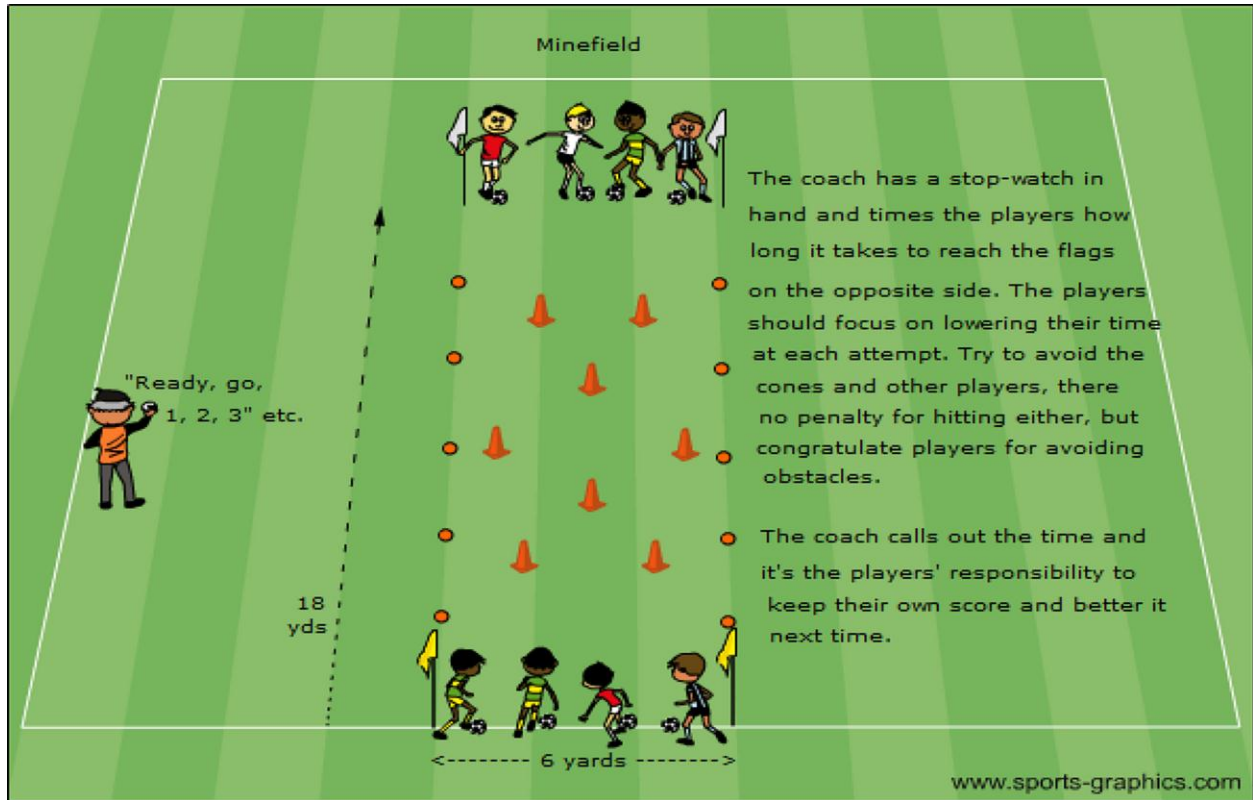
**Area:** For U6s; 3v3 approximately 18 x 16 yards, for U8s; 4v4 approximately 25 x 20 yards.

**Instructions:** To score the attacking team has to pass into any of the opponents' 3 goals.

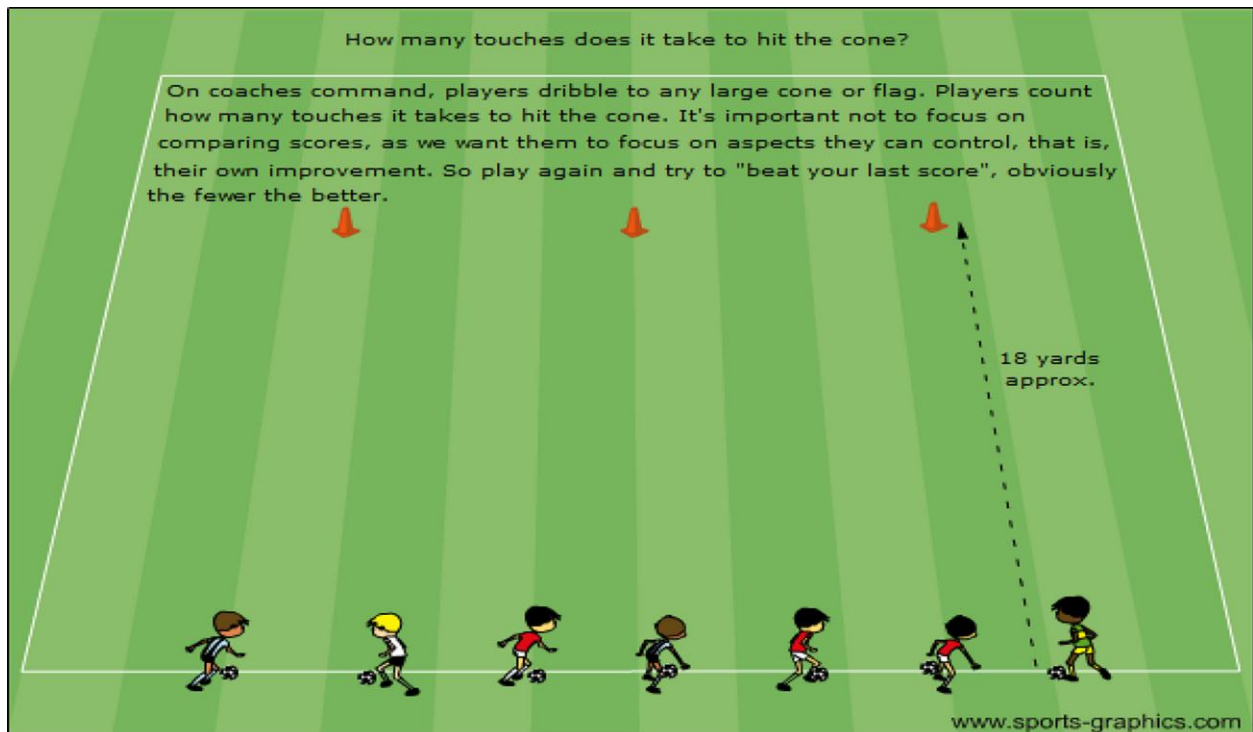
**Variation:** To encourage dribbling, to score you have to dribble through any of the opponents' 3 goals.

**Coaching in the game** (from USSF's "Best Practices for Coaching Soccer in the United States", page 8): "Encourage your players to be creative... Coaches should avoid the impulse to "coach" their players from "play to play" in order to help them win the match. Coaches should not be telling their young players to "pass rather than dribble," to "hold their positions" or to "never" do something (like pass or dribble in front of their own goal)". Mistakes are an important part of the learning process, and players should be allowed to make them without fear of reprimand.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> training session for U6s: Minefield



## U6-U8: How many touches to hit the cone





## U6-U8: Pizza dribble

**Pizza Dribble**

"Blue, 1, 2, 3, etc."

15 yds

10 yds

Players with a ball each, dribble inside the cheese pizza (yellow cones). The coach will then call a color (note there are 2 cones of each color on the outside circle). The player finds that color, in this example "Blue", then dribbles back to the middle to kick their ball against the flag. The coach calls out the time, and the player attempts to beat their own previous best time. Teach the following "It's better to focus on what you can control, that is lowering your own score, rather than focussing on the score of others".

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## U6-U8: Rocket landing

**Rocket Landing**

6 yds

8 yds

6 yds

Jupiter

Earth

Venus

Mars

6 yds

6 yds

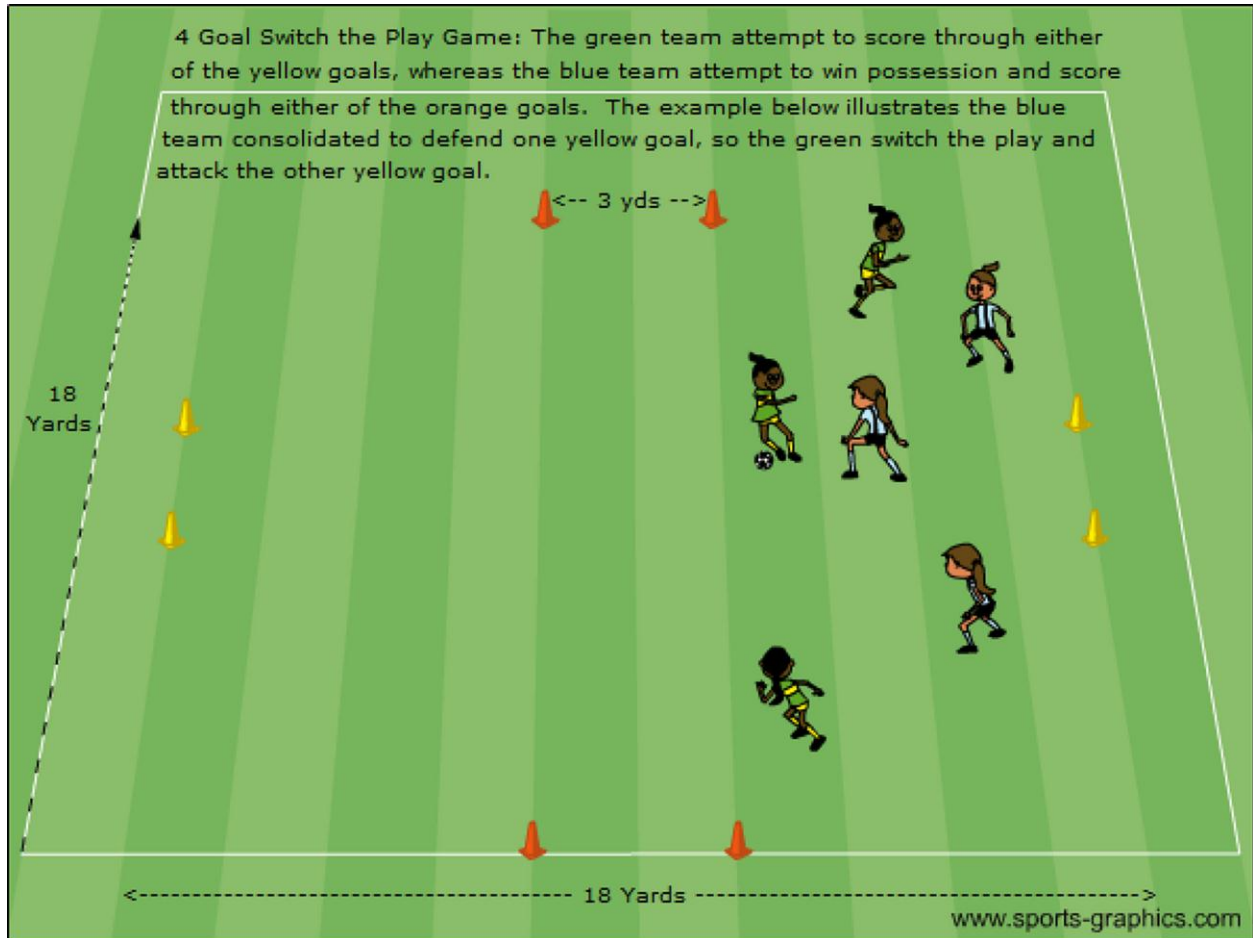
6 yds

"How many rockets can we land on Mars?"

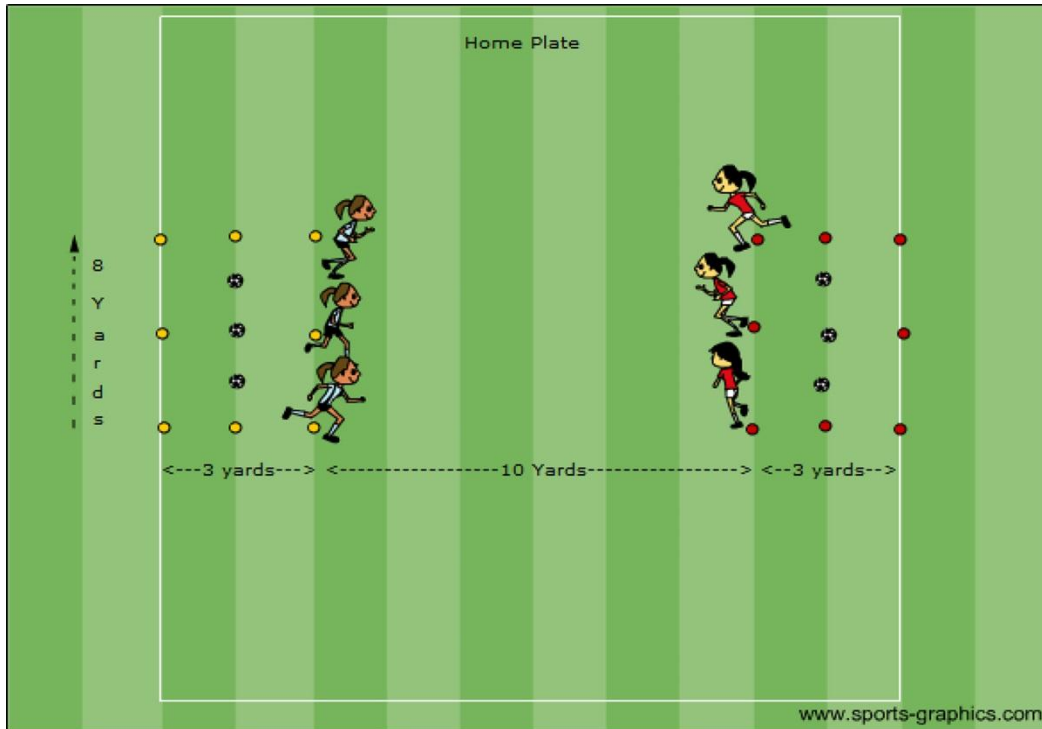
Name the four boxes after four different planets, and use different colored cones to distinguish them. The object of the game is to fire your rocket (the ball) and make it land on the specified planet (by having the ball stop in the box). The group play as a team to see how many rockets (balls) they can land on each planet. Note that the total playing area is not a square, this is to ensure that not all passes are the same distance (and it is possible to pass from Mars to Jupiter or vice-versa).

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U6-U8: 4 goal switch the play game

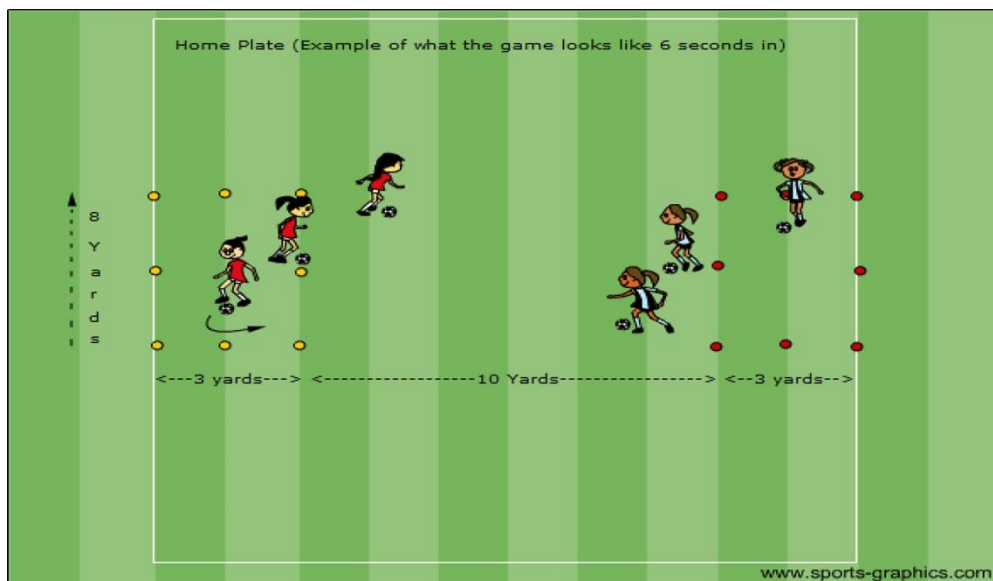


## U8-U9: Home plate

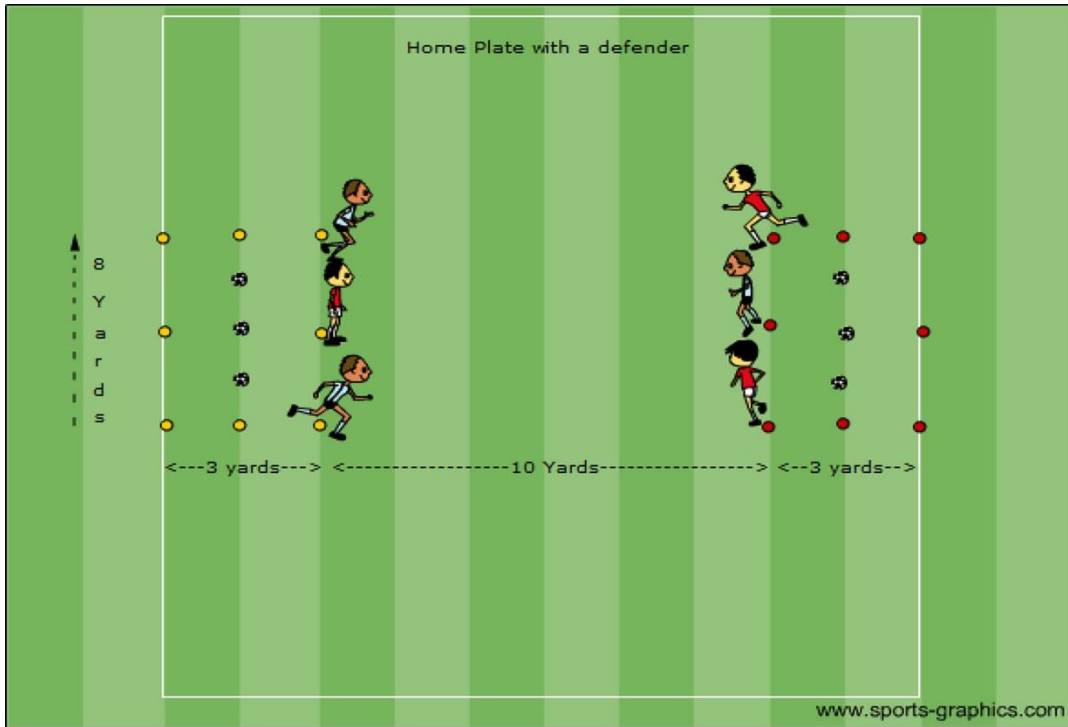


Area: Two 3x8 Yard boxes with a 10 yard channel in between. Instructions: Players are divided into teams, the coach calls “go”, and players sprint into the opponents’ box and steal one ball each. They then dribble the ball back to their original box, leave the ball there, and then return to steal another ball. After approximately 25 seconds the coach stops the game, and counts to see which team has stolen the most balls. Coaching Point: Show players what it looks like to dribble with their head up.

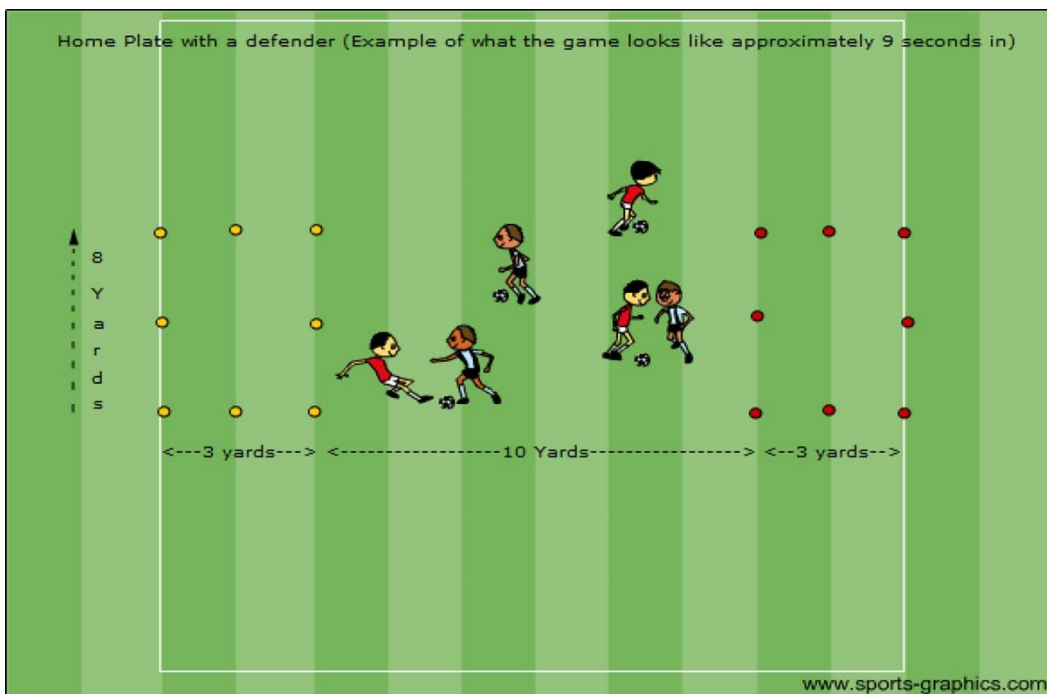
How it might look after 6 seconds...



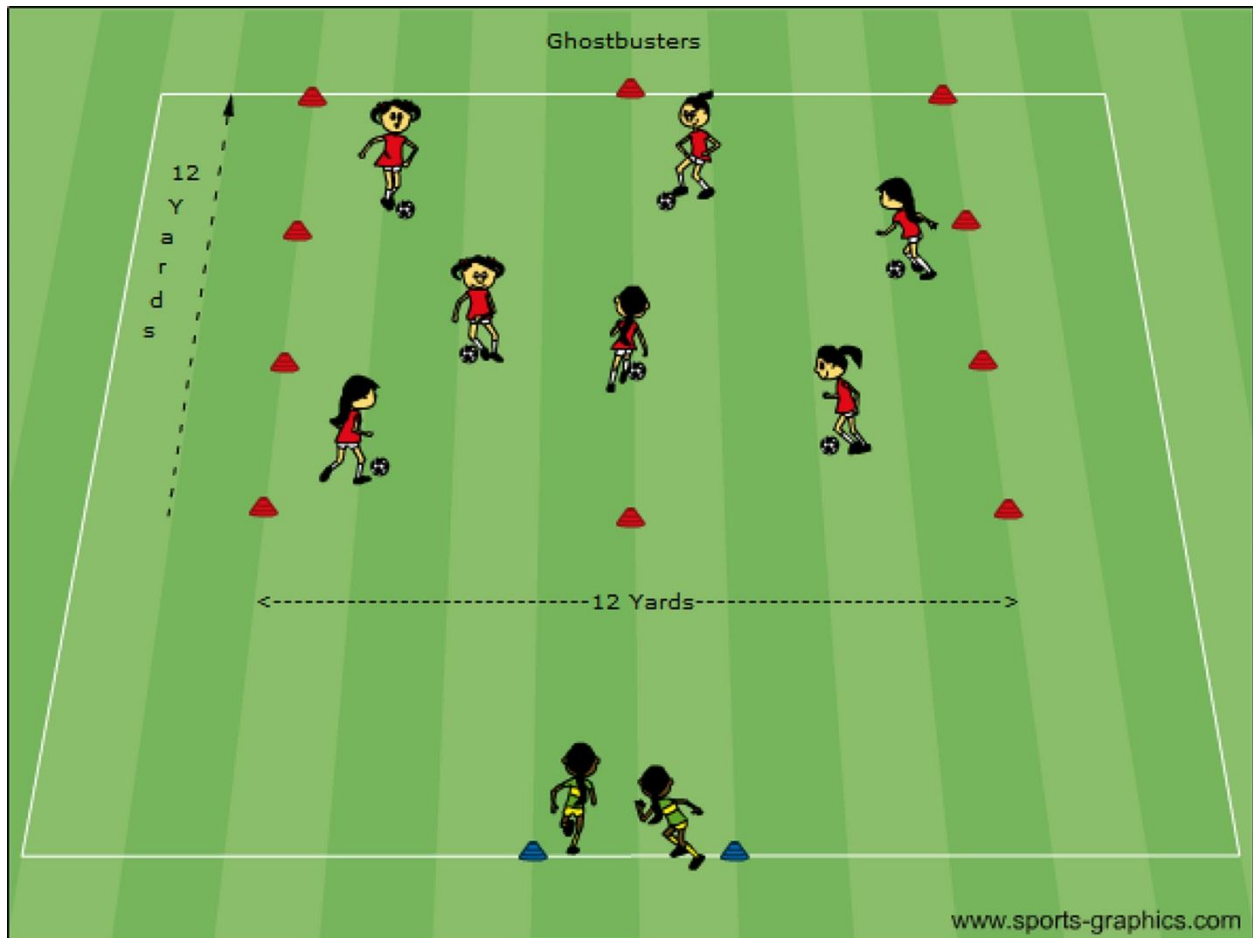
Progression: Home plate with a defender



Variation: Add a defender. For example, the red team steals a ball from the yellow box and tries to dribble it back to the red box. However, a blue defender is stationed outside the red box and tries to steal their ball and may kick it into the yellow box to score for their team. What it might look like after approximately 9 seconds...



## U8-U9: Ghostbusters 2



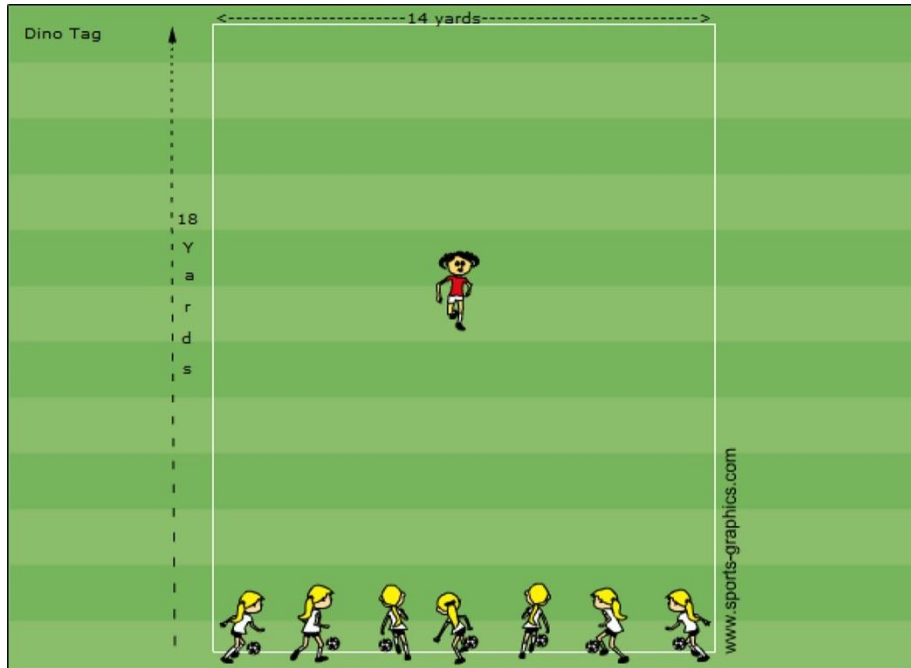
Area: Approximately 12x12 yards (increase size if too difficult for dribblers, reduce size if too easy).  
Alternatively, you could use a circle.

Instructions: Two players act as defenders, start outside the box. The coach starts the stop-watch, and the two defenders sprint into the box and try to kick all the balls out. Once all the balls are kicked out, the coach stops the watch and provides the two defenders their time. Dribblers work on their ability to shield the ball from pressure.

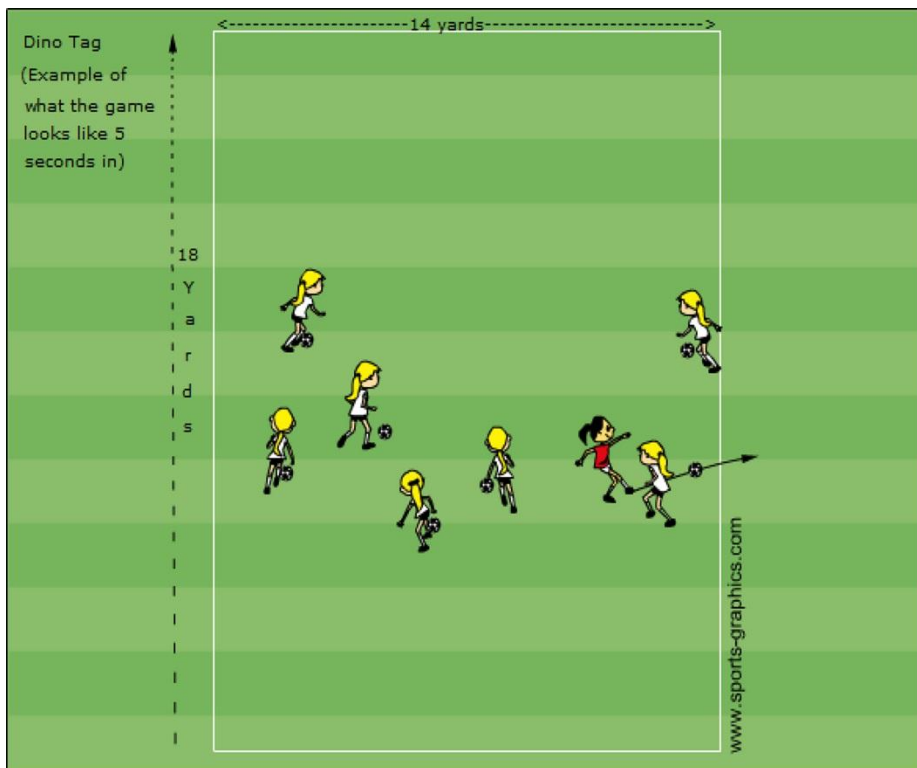
Demonstrate this: Adopt a side-on stance by pointing a shoulder at the opponents' chest. Using this method it becomes easier to see the defender and increase the distance between the opponent and the ball. Keep the ball moving, and play with your head up, so you may see passing and dribbling opportunities. Use your arms and shoulders to 'make yourself big' however, don't push with your hands, as this is likely to be interpreted as a foul.

For example: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJm\\_kC3Cg78](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJm_kC3Cg78)

U8-U9: Dino Tag



How the game might look 5 seconds in....(instructions on the following page)



Continued...

(Continued: Dino Tag)

Area: The size depends on the number and ability of players. Approximately 14 yards wide x 18 yards in length.

Instructions: Dinosaurs (dribblers pictured in white shirts) have a ball each. The objective is to keep their ball close and dribble it to the safe end line on the opposite side. The dinosaur catcher (pictured in red shirt) attempts to kick balls out of the playing area. If a dinosaur has their ball kicked out, they join the player in the middle and also become a dinosaur catcher.

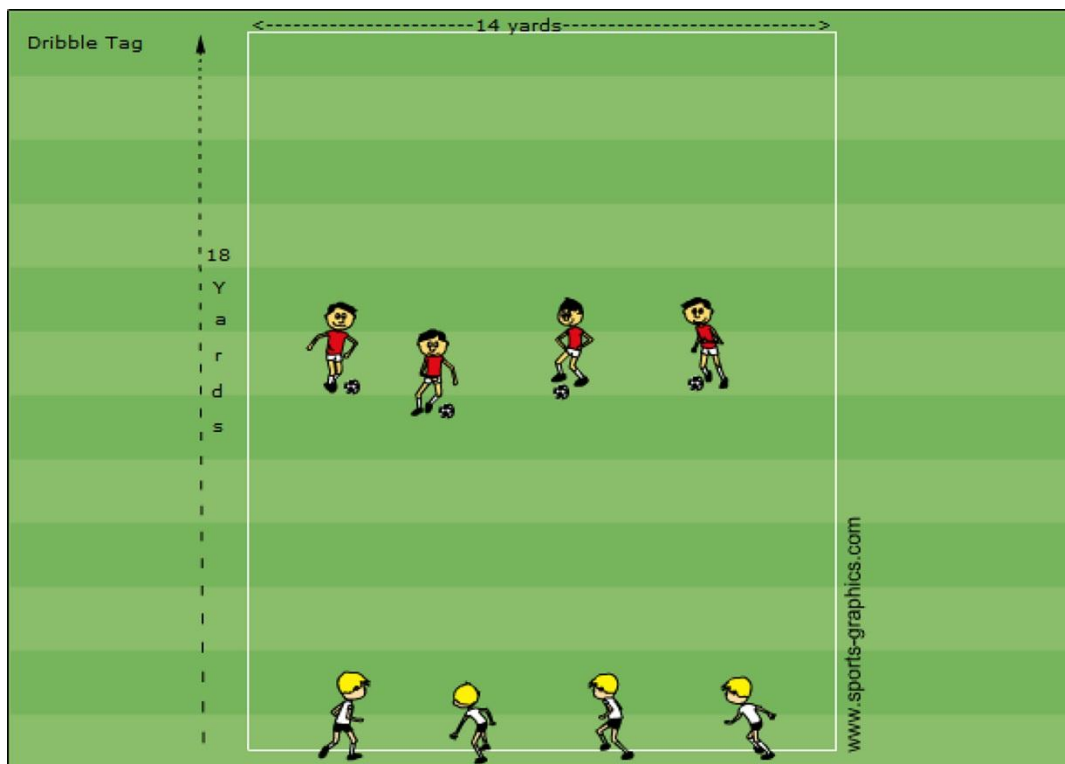
Demonstrate this: When I dribble, I turn my foot slightly inwards, so the ball makes contact with the outside of the foot close to the laces, seen here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YRWMyv2Zd8>

This game encourages dribbling with the head up, and is also useful for early development of 1v1 attacking and defending. For 1v1 attacking look for: attacker running directly at the defender, make a 'move' then accelerate away. For 1v1 defending focus on: delaying the attacker, side on stance, and don't lunge for the ball until you can definitely make contact.

**N.B.** If you focus on dribbling technique, 1v1 attacking and 1v1 defending in the same training session it will likely confuse the younger players, so stick to one theme, and keep them active (not too many stoppages).

3b) Dino Dribble tag (instructions on following page)

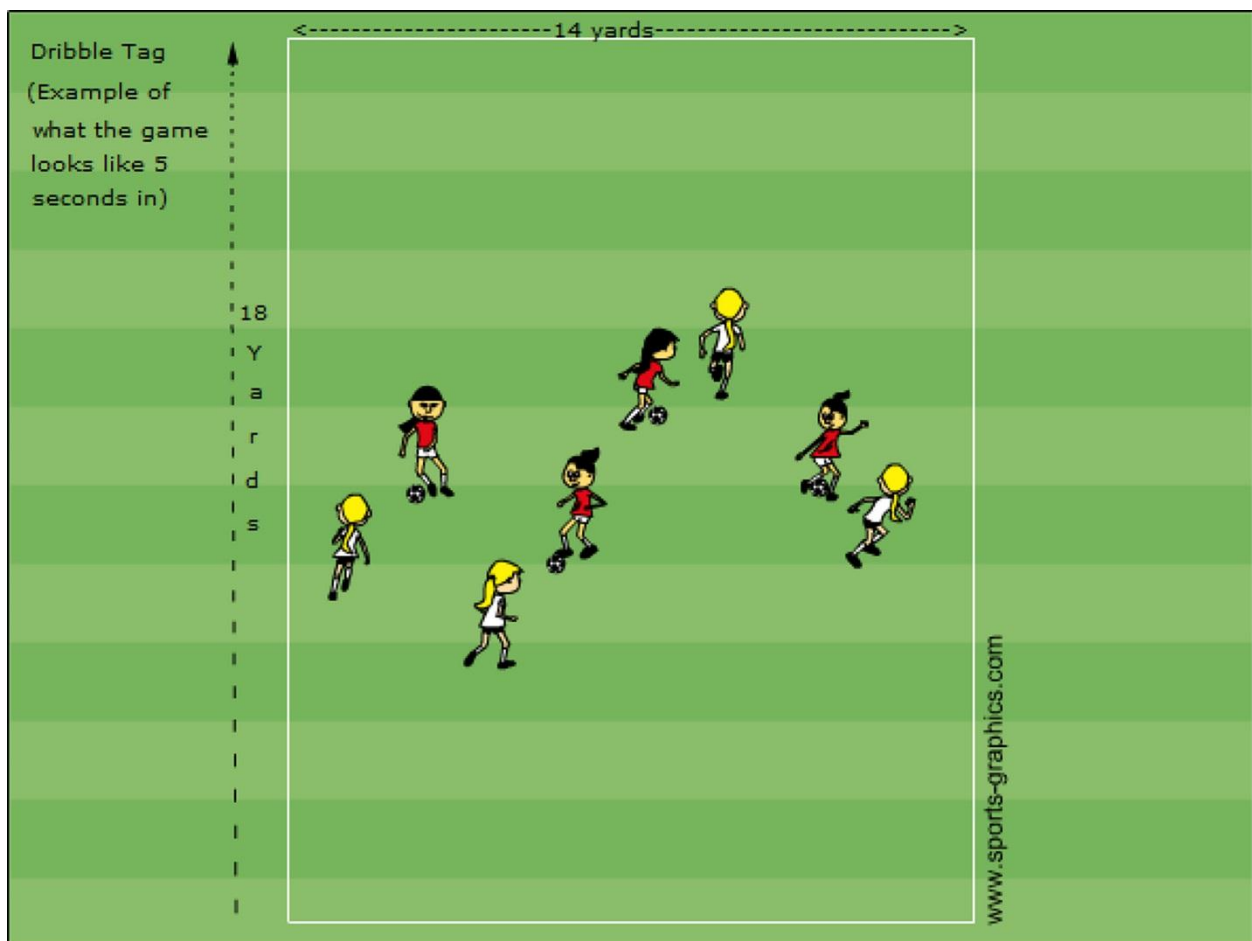


### 3b) Dino Dribble tag (continued from previous page)

Area: The size depends on the number and ability of players. Approximately 14 yards wide x 18 yards in length.

Instructions: Divide the group into 2, place the Dinosaurs at one end of the grid without a ball (pictured in white shirts in the previous illustration). The dinosaur catchers start in the middle of the grid and have a ball each (pictured in red shirts in the illustration). The dinosaur catcher must keep the ball close to them and tag the dinosaurs with their hand. The dinosaurs try to reach the other end of the grid without being tagged. If a dinosaur is tagged they get a soccer ball and join the players in the middle, thus becoming a dinosaur catcher.

How the game might look 5 seconds in....





## 15) U8-U9 - Castle-keep



Area: The two boxes (red & blue above) can be 20-30 yards apart (closer for younger players). The boxes are 6x6 yards (can be 8x8 for younger players to ease scoring).

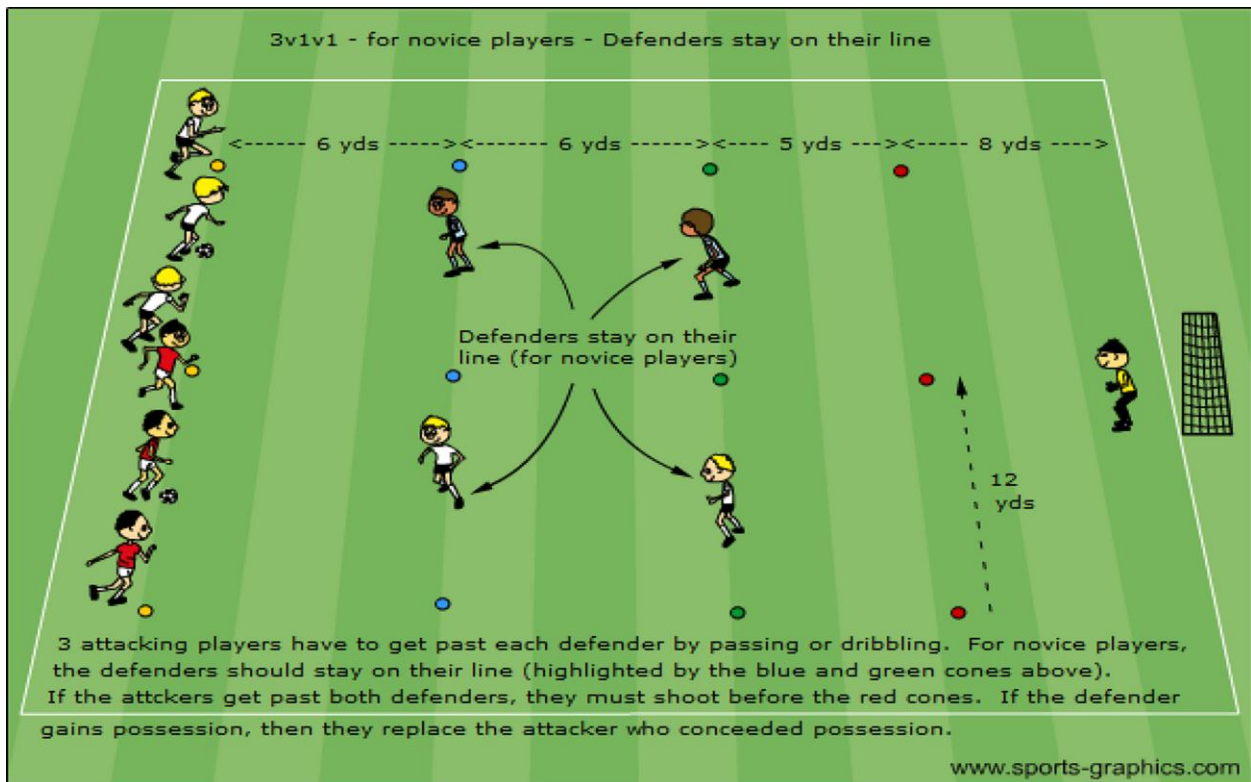
Instructions: The object of the game is to sprint from the starting positions above (except the 'keeper who guards the box), take one ball (from either side), dribble then pass the ball into the opponents' box. It is possible to score from a pass from behind the goal, the keeper guards the box but must never enter the box (no player is allowed to enter either box). Once the player has released their ball they may try to steal a ball from any opponent and score again. As the game progresses you'll notice increased opportunities for players to be able to pass to teammates in order to score. Play the game until all of the soccer balls are stationary in both boxes. Whichever team has passed the most balls into the opponents' box scores one point (see illustration below). Each time you play the game, rotate the 'keepers.

Coaching Points: This game tests many facets of the soccer including dribbling, passing, receiving, defending and goalkeeping. When dribbling, are players on their toes using the outside of the instep? Do they dribble with their head up? When passing does the plant foot point to the target? When defending does the player force play away from the goal box? Do they dive in or remain patient until the opponent takes a bad touch?

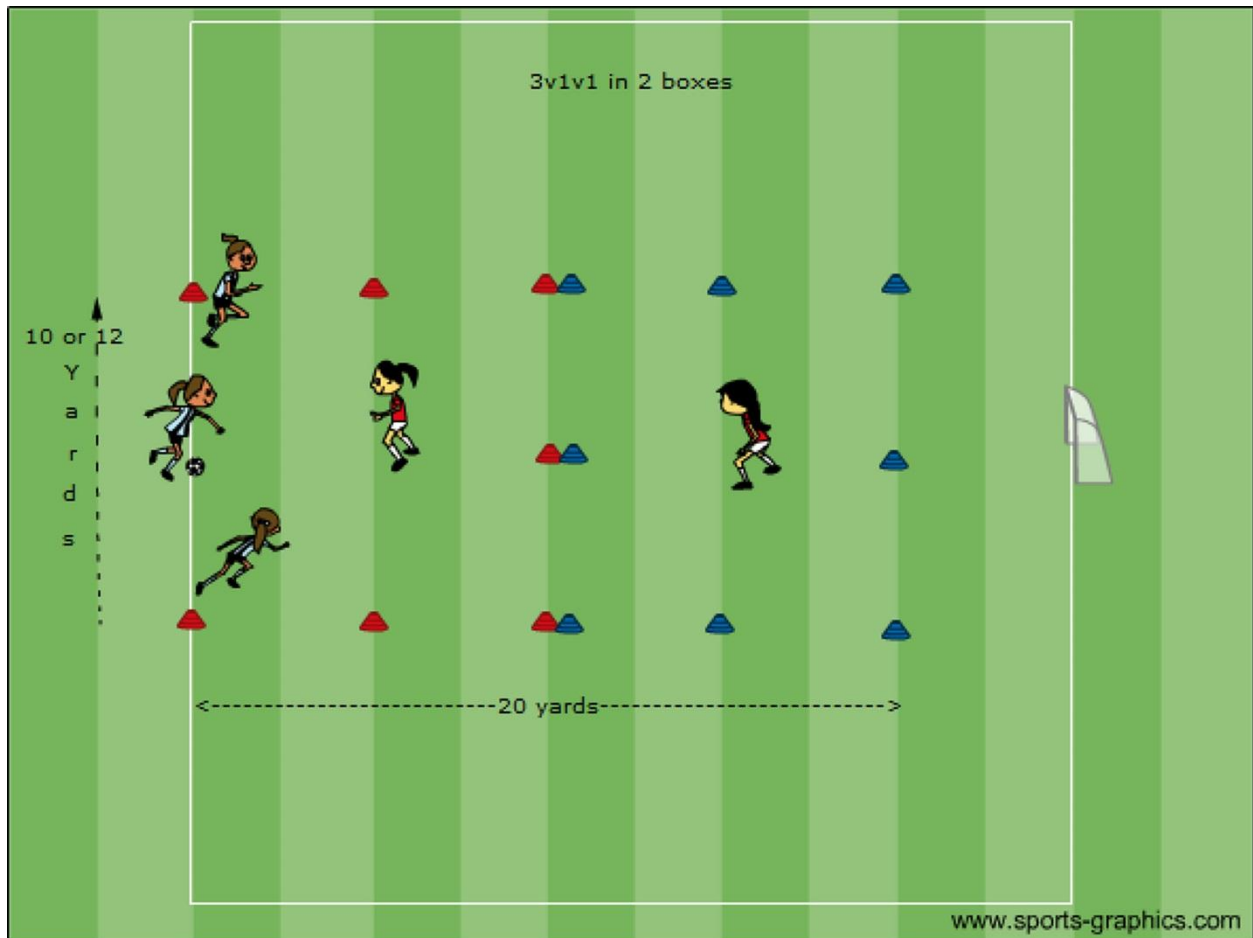
Castle-keep: How it might look, 5 or 6 seconds in...



U8-U9: 3v1v1 for novice players



## U8-U9: 3v1v1 in 2 boxes for more advanced players



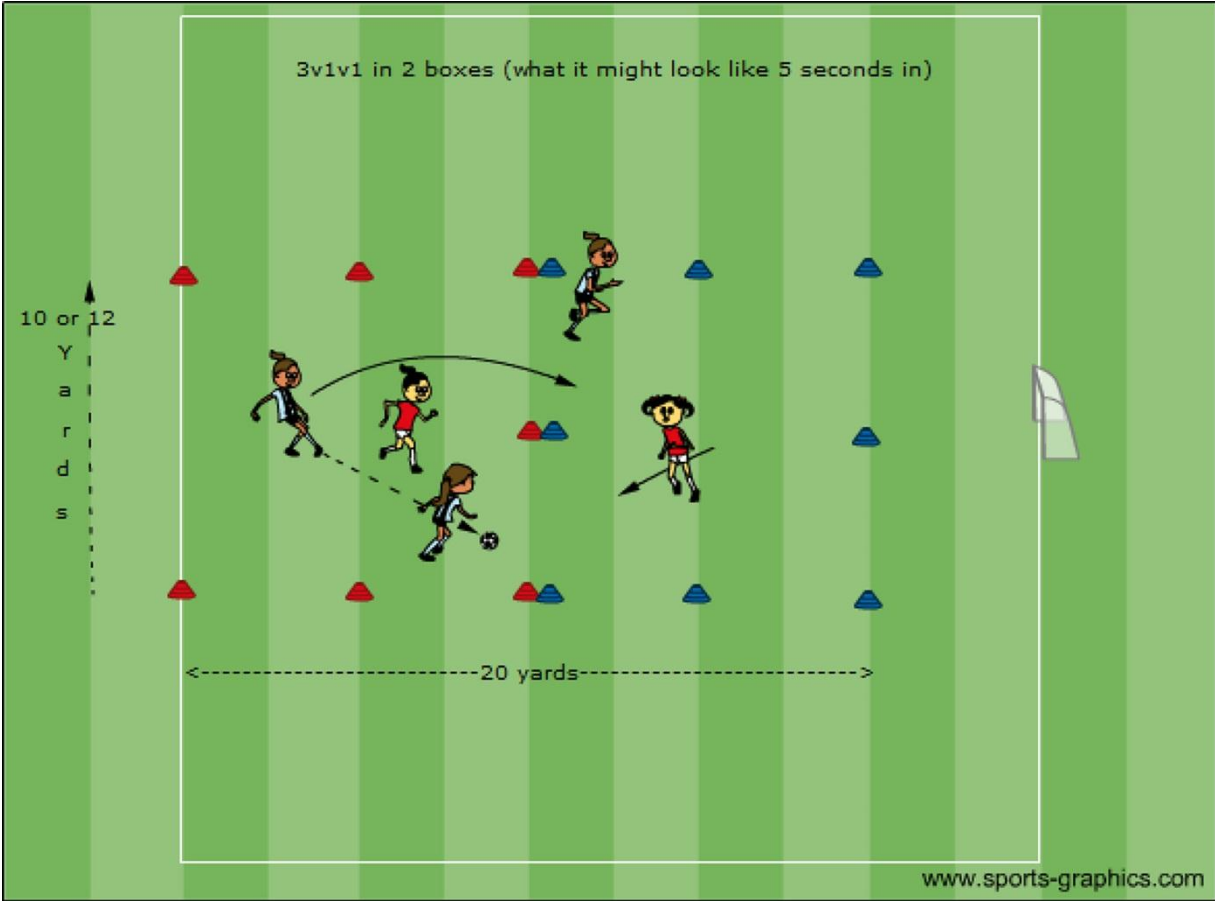
Area: 2 adjacent boxes, each box approximately 12x10 yards. Make the boxes larger if attacking players are having difficulties, make them smaller if it's too easy for them.

Instructions: The 3 attacking players (wearing blue) attack the defender in first box. The red defending players start in the middle of their respective boxes (they may not leave their box), and they attempt to kick the ball out or win possession. The attacker with the ball dribbles, and makes a decision regarding whether to pass to teammate or beat the defender. The attacking trio aims to maintain possession past the 1st defender and repeat this into the second box, and finish with a shot on goal (with or without 'keepers). If the defender wins possession they come out of their box and switch with the attacker who lost possession.

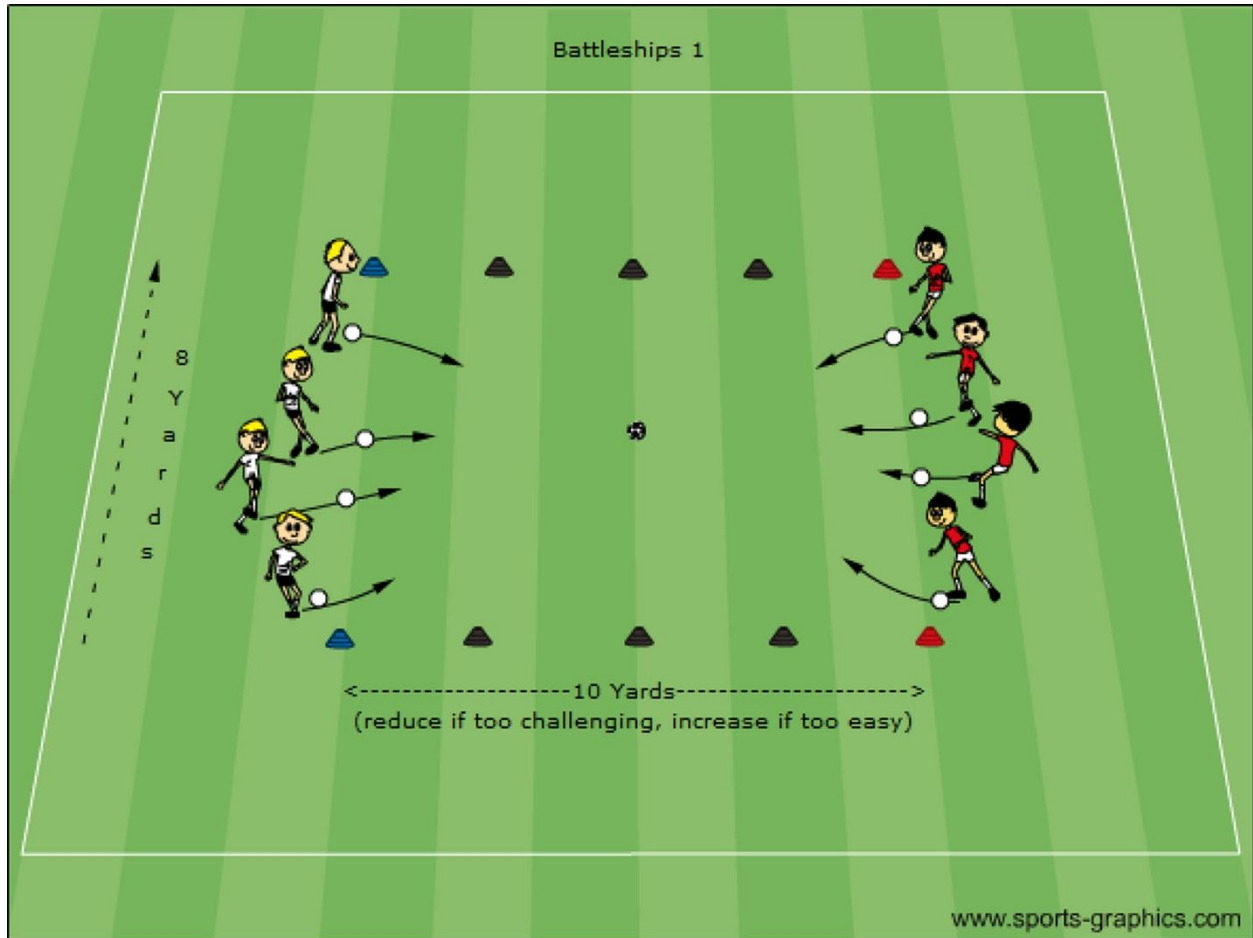
Tactical Coaching Points: The attacking player in possession has to make a decision based on the positioning of the defender. If the defender takes away the passing lane then perhaps a 'move' is in order, or can they beat the defender with the speed of their dribble? If the defender encourages the pass, then ensure that the dribbler draws the defender toward them before passing it to teammate. This will allow the pass recipient more time when they receive the pass. Also, encourage creativity.

Variation: Manipulate the size of the boxes depending on the ability of the players, and add a 'keeper.

3v1v1 in 2 boxes: How it might look, 5 seconds in...



## U8-U9: Battleships 1

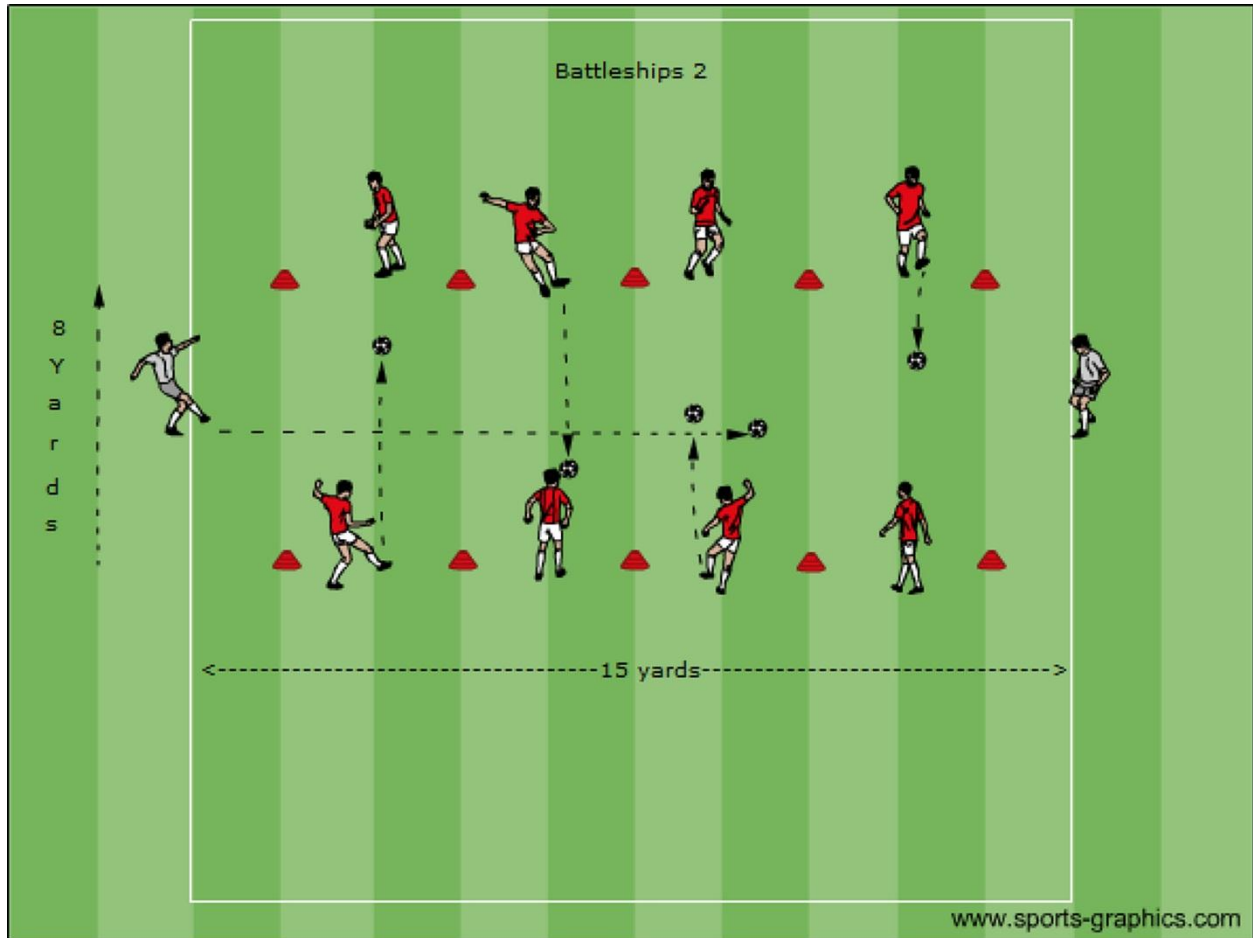


Area: Depends on the ability of the players, so experiment. Start with 10 yards wide x 8 yards length. (Make the area wider for more experienced players, narrower for less experienced).

Instructions: Every player has a ball, and the 'atomic' bomb/ball in the middle is a different color to the other soccer balls. On the coaches' command the players pass their ball in an attempt to strike the middle 'atomic' bomb/ball and make it go over the opponents' line. As soon as a player has struck their ball, they should find any other ball and pass again. However, no player may retrieve a ball from inside the playing area as that is the coaches' responsibility. A point is scored when the atomic bomb/ball goes over the opponents' line, all players then find any ball and play is re-started by the coach.

Coaching Point: Can you demonstrate the following rather than providing a long-winded explanation: Short passing, inside of the foot technique - Plant foot points to target, kicking foot comes through the ball at a 90 degree angle to plant foot, and maintain this shape thro' impact. Kicking foot: strike the ball with the inside of the foot, hit the middle of the ball to keep it along the ground, ankle firm, toe points slightly up.

## U8-U9: Battleships 2

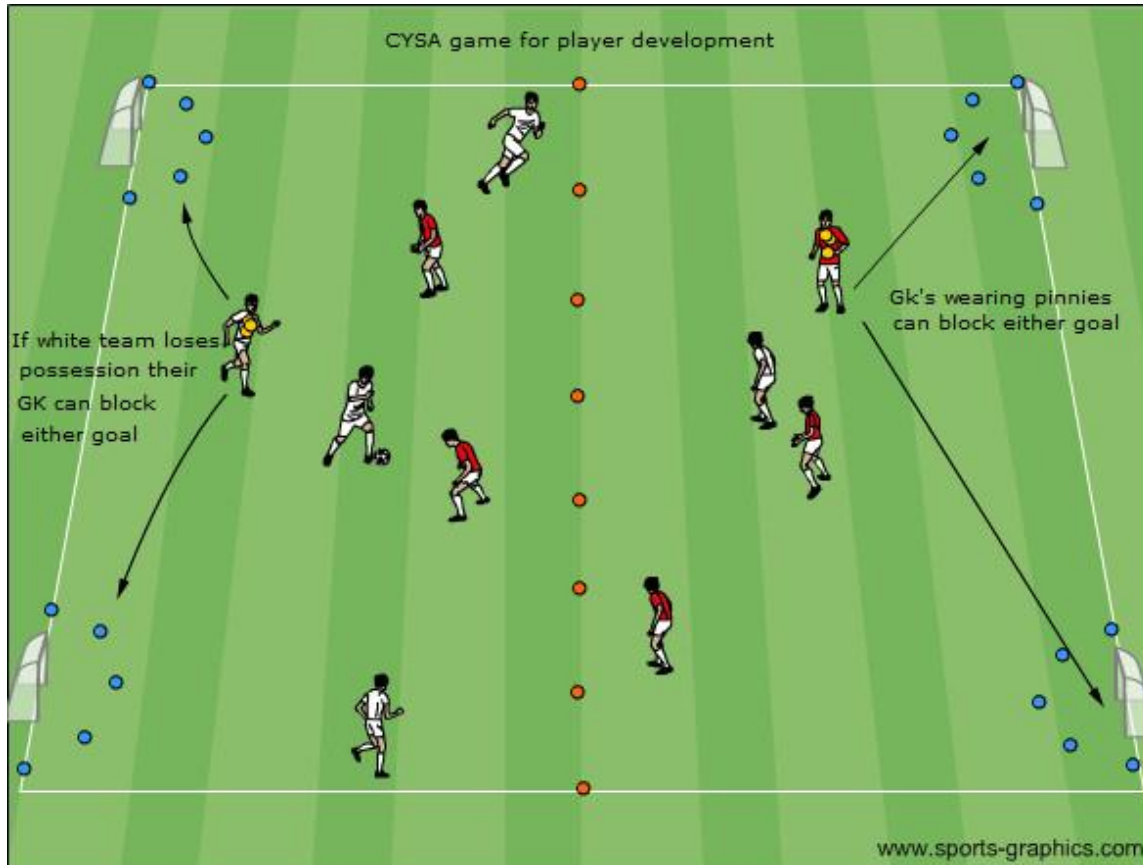


**Area:** Per illustration, however manipulate depending on the level of players. For novice players make the distances shorter, for more experienced players you could make it wider and longer.

**Organization:** 2 players (wearing grey in illustration) are selected by the coach. At a time of their choosing, one of the grey players passes to the other. This pass must be along the ground, if it's not then deduct a point from their score. The grey players score a point if they complete a pass between each other and their ball is not hit by one of the red players. The red players aim their pass to hit the grey players' ball. If and when a red pair hit the grey players' ball, they swap places with the grey pair in the scoring lane.

**Coaching Point:** Can you demonstrate the following rather than providing a long-winded explanation: Short passing, inside of the foot technique - Plant foot points to target, kicking foot comes through the ball at a 90 degree angle to plant foot, and maintain this shape thro' impact. Kicking foot: strike the ball with the inside of the foot, hit the middle of the ball to keep it along the ground, ankle firm, toe points slightly up.

## U8-U9: 4 Goal Game for Player Development

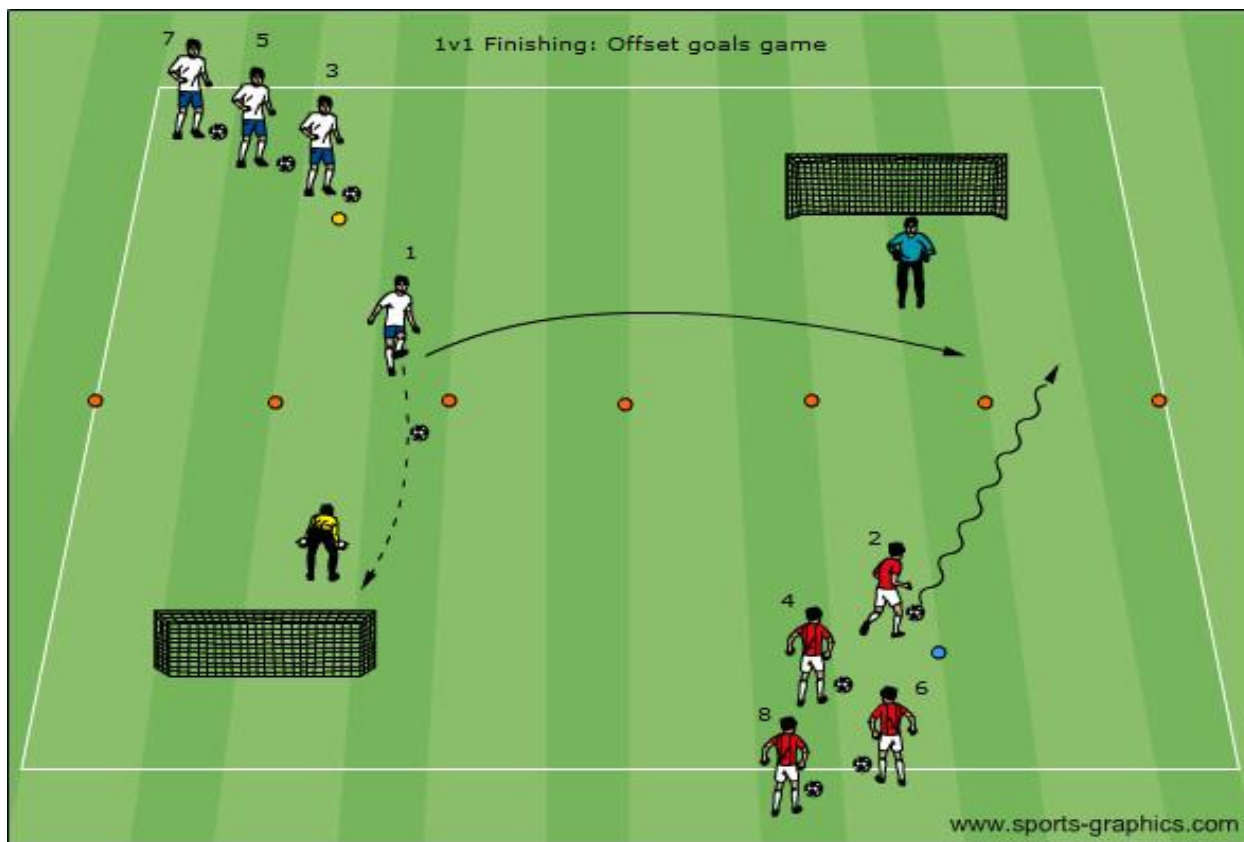


Area: 35 x 35 yards (this can be manipulated to suit the ability/athleticism of your players)

Instructions: Play 5v5 or 6v6 with one goalkeeper per team (but they cannot use their hands). Both 'keepers wear a pinnie (see yellow dots above), and are able to join in as a field player whenever they choose. However, when their team is defending, the goalkeeper occupies one of the two goals in their half. Whichever goal the 'keeper occupies, means the opposing team cannot score in that goal. Also, the goalkeeper may run to block the other goal if the opposition 'switches' the point of attack. The team in possession cannot score from their defensive half of the field. The blue cones illustrated in front of each goal (above) indicate that no player, except the goalkeeper, is permitted in that area. The offside rule applies.

Technical & Tactical Coaching Points: This is an example of "The Game is the Teacher" because it teaches the player in possession to play with their head up, in order to locate the opponents' 'keeper. This will enhance the players' ability to switch the point of attack, or it might encourage a quick counter-attack. Therefore, this game will enhance technical ability (dribbling with head up), and also tactical decision-making capabilities (for example, when to switch play, and when to counter-attack).

## U8-U9: Offset Goals Game for 1v1 finishing



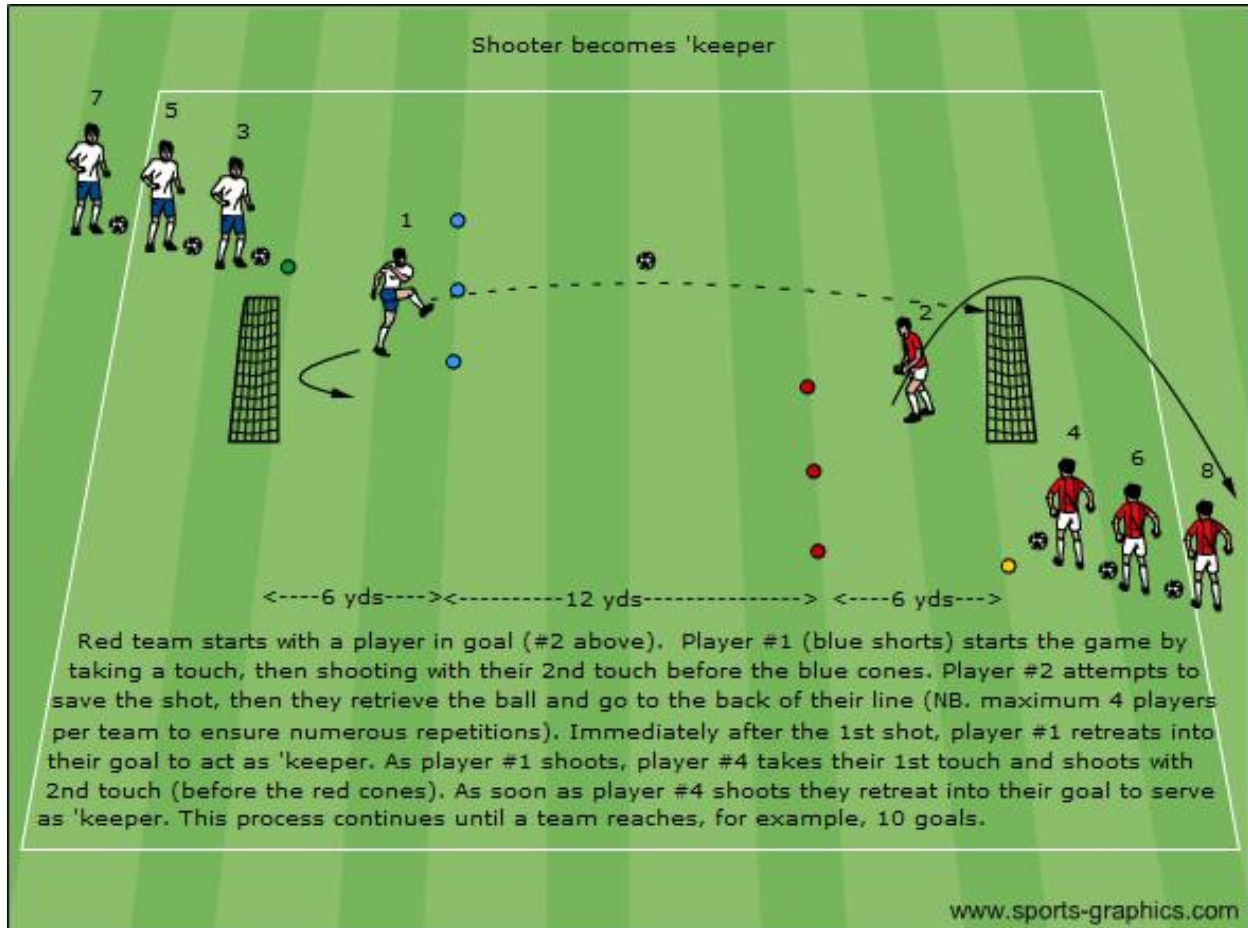
Area: For novice players the distance between the goal and the half-way line (red cones above) is 12 yards, so total length of field is 24 yards. The goals are offset by approximately 15 yards (adjust according to the athleticism of the players).

Instructions: Teams start with 2 permanent goalkeepers in goal. Player #1 (above) dribbles from their line, and shoots before the cones (this rule is in play for the 1<sup>st</sup> shot only, after this the dribble may shoot from anywhere). As soon as player #1 shoots, they become a defender, so they sprint across to defend against Player #2. Player #2 may start their dribble immediately after player #1 has shot, and attempt to score on the blue 'keeper above (remember after the 1<sup>st</sup> shot the players can shoot from anywhere). Player #3 can only advance on the yellow 'keeper after the following scenarios: If the defender wins possession, if the defender clears the ball, if a goal is scored, or if the shot goes wide. Remember as soon as player #2 shoots, they sprint across to defend player #3. The process continues until a team reaches, for example, 5 goals. Although players are 'in lines', which goes against the philosophy of this course, there is so much activity the players will appreciate the rest between attempts at goal.

Technical Coaching Points: This game allows the players to practice various shooting techniques under pressure (described previously). If the 'keeper is close, consider a shot hard and low to the ground. If the attacker wants to take on or go around the 'keeper, review the key factors described previously under "Moves to beat opposing players".



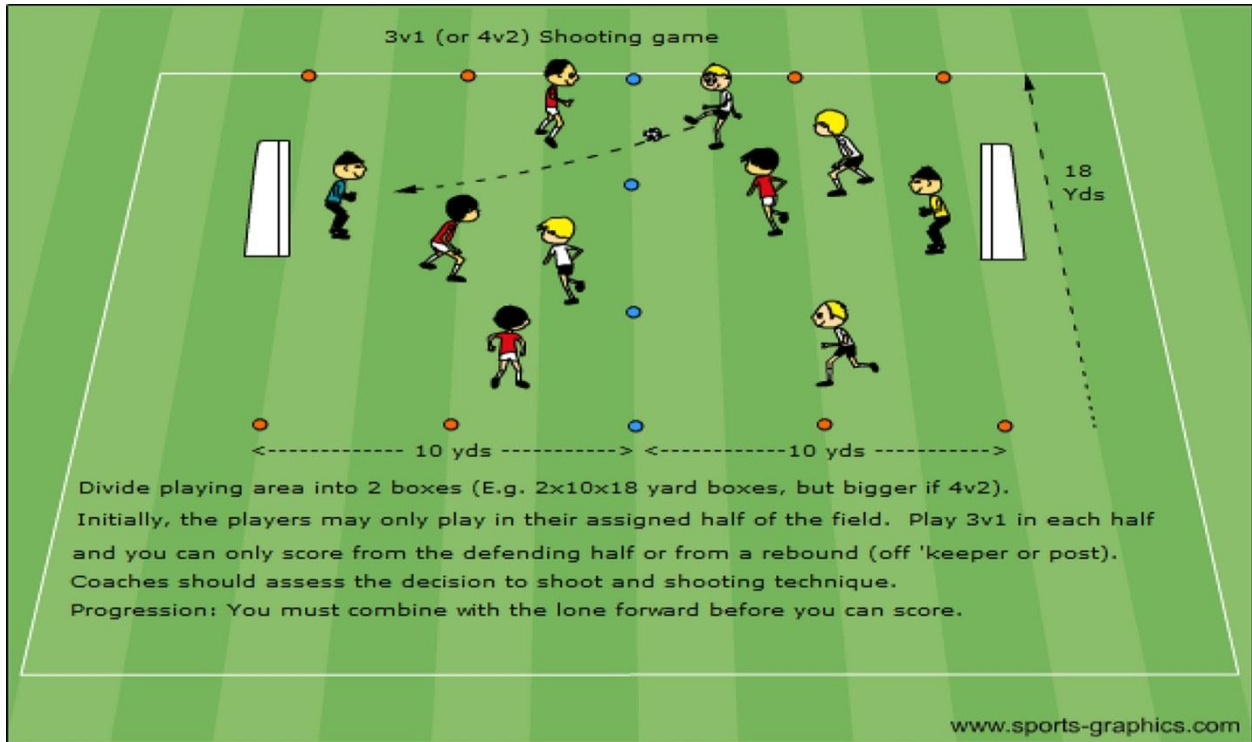
## U8-U9: Shooter becomes 'keeper



Area: See illustration above, except for U8-U9 players the length of the playing area should be reduced (6 yard line in front of each goal, and 8 yards in between, not 12 yards)

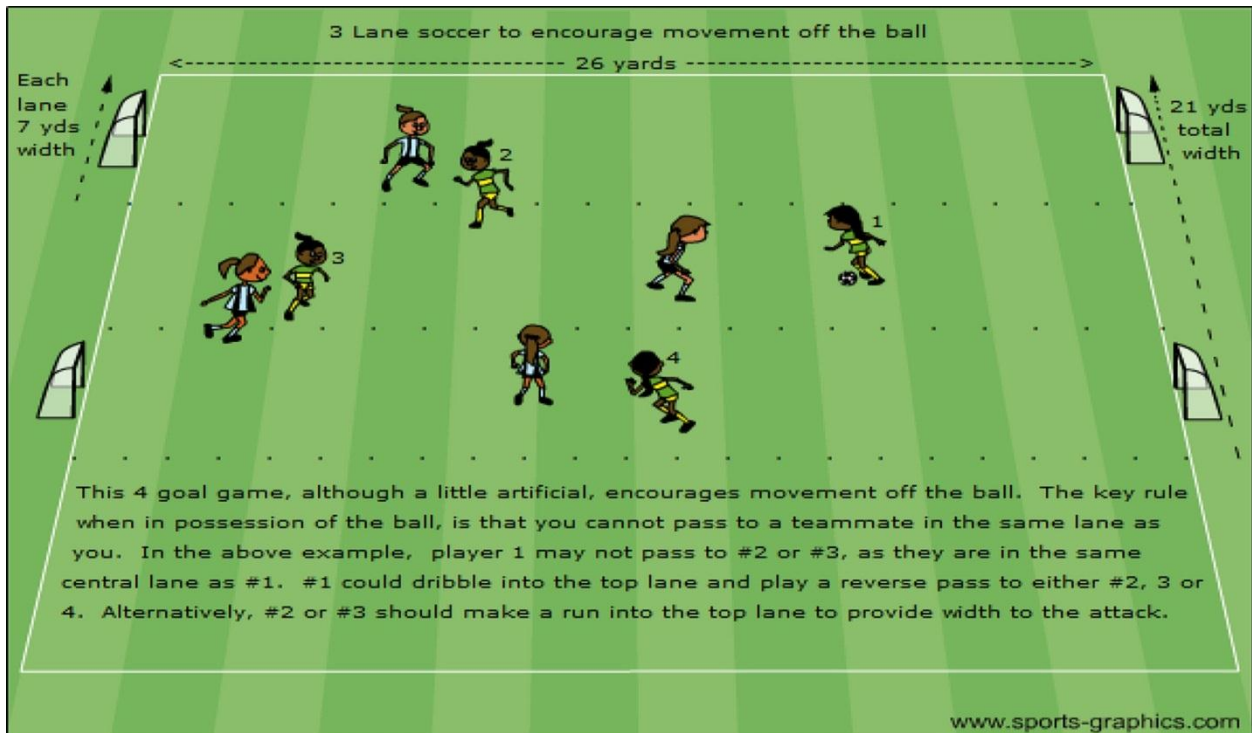
Instructions: One team (red team illustrated above), starts with a player in goal (player #2). Player #1 (blue shorts above) starts the game by taking a touch, they shoot with their 2nd touch before the blue cones. Player #2 attempts to save the shot, then they retrieve the ball and go to the back of their line. Immediately after the 1st shot (above), player #1 retreats into their goal to act as the 'keeper. As player #1 shoots, player #4 takes their 1st touch and shoots with their 2nd touch (before the red cones). As soon as player #4 shoots they drop-back into their goal to serve as 'keeper. This process continues until a team reaches, for example, 10 goals. Technical Coaching Points: When shooting low with power the key technical elements are (i) plant foot beside the ball, and points to the target (ii) The knee of the kicking foot, and the head must be over the ball (iii) The ball is struck with the laces, and the toe of the kicking foot points down through impact. Progression: Consider that when players are young the goal is large and the 'keeper is small, so shooting high is rewarded. However, as players age the 'keepers are taller, the ability to shoot low is important. A progression to encourage this is to say "the goal only counts if the shot remains below the height of the coaches' waist".

### 3) 3v1 or 4v2 Shooting Game



NB. If you have extra players they can be used as offensive targets beside each goal.

### 4) 3 Lane Soccer Game



## Preparation for USSF 'E' License: An Introduction to Principles of Play

Allen Wade, former Director of Coaching for English FA, was the first to formalize the "Principles" in the late 60's in the manual, "The FA Guide to Training and Coaching." Tony Waiters, former coach of Canadian National Team: "a coach who does not fully understand the Principles of Play will always be tactically challenged."

### The Principles of Play

#### ATTACK

Penetration: Is there a forward pass?

Support (to retain possession)

Width

Mobility (speed of play, movement, inter-changing positions)

Improvisation/Creativity

#### DEFENCE

Delay: Should the defender apply immediate pressure or drop-off?

Depth (defensive support)

Concentration (Compaction)

Balance (position of defenders other than 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Discipline/Patience

### Practice Preparation for USSF 'E' License

Prepare your practices so that challenges to the player are increased gradually (simple to complex). For example, start with no-pressure, no opposition, and then increase pressure by **adding opponents, manipulating the playing area, or increasing decision making options**. Your warm-up should link with the objectives to come, and continue to focus on your objectives in the main-activity, and always conclude with an actual game. It's important to provide information that is correct and concise, because irrelevant or excessive feedback is likely to create confusion. The E License focuses on ages 9-12 so ensure that the activities are developmentally appropriate.

#### Example from USSF E License Curriculum ....

Stage 1: Technical warm-up (the purpose is to prepares the players for the activity ahead, and allow for many repetitions)

Stage 2: Small-sided activity (individual & small group tactics)

Stage 3: Expand small-sided activity (Direction of play crucial & add principles of Att. & Def.)

Stage 4: The game (no conditions, use a formation, offside & laws of game)

So you should gradually introduce opposition, and gradually introduce the rules and elements of game-relevant space.

#### Required components per stage:

\*Introduce some level of opposition by Stage 2

\*Introduce a specific attacking and defending direction by Stage 3

\*Introduce the un-restricted game environment by Stage 4 (including goals + GK)