

# EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U7-U8 Mini Soccer



David Clarke

**SOCCER COACH** WEEKLY

Part of the **EasiCoach Skills Curriculum** – helping grassroots coaches teach core soccer skills to young players



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By David Clarke



# CREDITS, LEGAL & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Welcome to EasiCoach™ Soccer Skills Activities – the parents’ survival guide to coaching soccer

### **Dear Beginner Coach, Volunteer Dad or Mum, or “Roped-In” Helper**

If the world of soccer coaching seems a little daunting, don’t worry, you are not alone! Like many parents involved in coaching their children:

- You volunteered to help, or were volunteered!
- You don’t know much about soccer, or coaching.
- You don’t want to let the side down.
- You want to do the best you can but don’t have time to go on a course.
- You’re worried about coaching “the wrong thing”.

EasiCoach provides ready-made, age-appropriate, safe training activities, set out clearly on a single page, that even a child could understand.

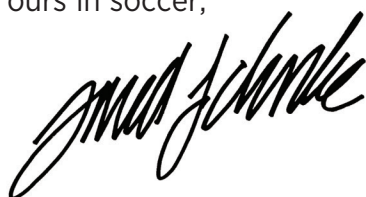
For each activity there is also a relevant game, so the players learn a skill in an activity and then use that skill in a game. This helps to implant the skill into a player’s DNA for them to use throughout their playing adventure. The activities and games are simple and easy to follow, and will make your life easier.

How does this help you? EasiCoach coaching activities will help you to:

- Quickly understand what it is you’re trying to achieve.
- See what you need to do from just a few words and pictures.
- Grasp the key dos and don’ts at a glance.
- Check you have all the equipment you need (never more than basics).
- Cater for more or fewer players at your session.
- Speak to your players with confidence.

But here’s what’s really great about the EasiCoach approach. Follow all the materials in this manual and your players will be learning the right skills for their age group. They will be having more fun, and be on a gradual development pathway that will make them better, more skilful, players and continue playing soccer for longer.

Yours in soccer,



David Clarke

# GETTING STARTED

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## Your EasiCoach Activity Sheets

Each of the activities in this manual covers a simple soccer skill appropriate for U7 or U8 age groups.

These age groups have just started soccer, so they know little or nothing about the game or how to play – perhaps you don't either. This doesn't matter as the main objective is to have fun!

Here's what you do to help them.

- Read the Beginners' Guide below.
- In your one hour session, we suggest you run one or (depending on time) two activities from this book, and then play a Mini Soccer game.
- Each activity comes with a setup sheet to show you (or your helpers) where to put the cones, balls and players in order to run the activity. (It's great if this can be done before the players arrive!)
- Details on how to run a Mini Soccer game are below.

## The EasiCoach Beginners Guide to Mini Soccer

Here are the main things you need to know about coaching and organising U7 and U8 soccer. Don't worry, it's not as hard as you think. The good news is that coaching the game has just got simpler!

**Length of the session:** The coaching, training, games or matches combined should last for no more than 60 minutes at U7 and U8. You should plan for no more than two EasiCoach activities each taking 20 minutes in total, followed by a game, also 20 minutes. Simple.

**Set up:** Arrive earlier than the players if you can, to set up the playing area for the chosen activities for the day. Set up two EasiCoach activities and be ready for the players to arrive.

**Shin pads:** Every player wears shin pads or they cannot take part.

## Getting Started

**Parents:** The most influential people in terms of a child's psychological and sociological development are his or her parents. A child's beliefs, values, perceptions, attitudes and goals are shaped by their home influences and have a profound effect in later life. Evidence suggests that interest and support from the home are vital in a child's overall development. With this evidence, engaging parents in the learning experience of their children, if guided and educated correctly, can lead to positive effects in reinforcing messages of support you offer to the players during the sliver of time you have with them.





Keen though they are to make a difference, unless they are helping, parents are now recommended to stand at least 3 yards back from the edge of the pitch. If space allows, your pitch set up should incorporate a cone or rope barrier to show parents where to stand. Encouragement of players is welcomed and criticism frowned upon.

### TIPS FOR DEALING WITH PARENTS

- Organise a pre-season meeting for players and parents.
- Talk to the parents before/after coaching and explain what you are doing and why you are doing it; explain the benefits.
- Use a questionnaire to get the views from the parents, what else can be improved.
- Hold a Parents' Evening – hold evenings when parents can come along with their child and discuss how they are getting on.
- Set them basic tasks – this could be asking for support around setting out equipment or keeping a record of playing time for you.

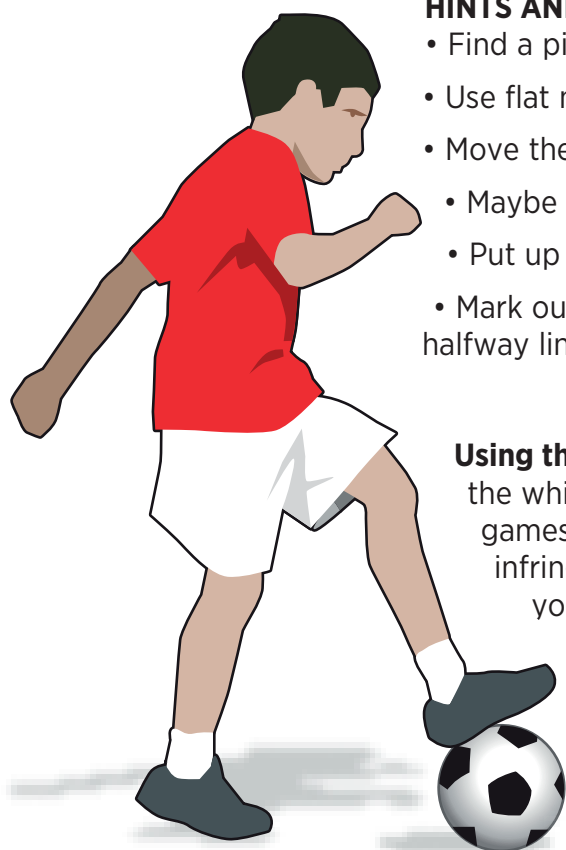
### SOME QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK PARENTS:

Do your actions on game day:

1. Demonstrate trust in the coach?
2. Centre around the players' needs?
3. Help or confuse the player(s)?

## Refereeing and Game Coaching

You might hope not to have to get involved in refereeing, or “game coaching” as it is becoming known, or you might be dead keen to try. These days the objective is a free-flowing game, so the person with the whistle is more of a helper than a referee. Each side having a coach is no longer advised (a lot less shouting!), freeing up helpers to run other games. This is needed because there are smaller numbers of players per game.



### HINTS AND TIPS FOR MATCHES

- Find a piece of grass the appropriate size.
- Use flat markers to highlight the goal area to help the goalkeepers.
- Move the portable goals to the right place.
- Maybe look at using a 3G pitch or commercial provider as a venue.
- Put up the Respect barrier for the parents to stand behind.
- Mark out a small technical area for the coaches and subs near the halfway line.

**Using the whistle:** Although the emphasis at this age is on using the whistle as little as possible, it’s still valuable to start and stop games, highlight dangerous play, stop for injuries or when serious infringements occur. And it’s helpful for getting attention, too! But you could just say “Stop!” as an alternative!

### GOALPOST SAFETY

Several serious injuries and fatalities have occurred in recent years as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of goalposts. Safety is always of paramount importance and everyone in soccer must play their part to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future.

## Guidelines for Mini Soccer

### PLAYING AREA

**Halfway line:** The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The centre mark is indicated at the mid-point of the halfway line. This is also used as the retreat line when restarting play with a goal kick.

**Goal size:** The distance between the posts is 12ft and the distance between the lower edge of the cross bar and the ground is 6ft.

**The ball:** The ball should be size three for U7 and U8. It should be safe and made of leather or other suitable material.

**Number of players:** Under 7 and Under 8 play 4v4 or 5v5.

A match may not START if either team consists of fewer than four players. The minimum number of players in a team required for a match to CONTINUE is also four. Matches can begin with 5v4. Players must play with and against players only from their own age range (check with local authorities). Each team must not have a squad greater than double the size of the team per age. Any number of substitutes, without being named, may be used at any time with the permission of the referee. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player.

### PLAYING EQUIPMENT

Players must wear shin pads and goalkeepers must wear a distinguishing playing top. Shin pads must be covered entirely by the socks. Players must wear the appropriate clothing dependent on the weather.

Correct footwear must be worn for the surface of the pitch e.g. no metal studs on artificial grass pitches.

### REFEREES

**The Authority of the Referee:** Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws for Mini Soccer in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.

Furthermore, referees should also recognize their role is to facilitate the learning of the players, for example, allow young children to take a second attempt at a throw-in if the first is not within the Laws.

### DURATION OF THE GAME

In any one day, no player shall play more than 40 minutes in one game. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer or organisation to ensure the child does not exceed this. Each league/competition will determine its own playing time within the maximum time permitted, however, the maximum duration will be two halves of 20 minutes. It is permitted during development matches that the periods of play can be split into equal quarters. The half time interval must not exceed five minutes.

## A 1-2-3 of Coaching Young Children

### 1. USE THE 30 SECOND RULE

The 30 second rule works because children learn best by doing, not listening, and 30 seconds is about as much as most of them can take. So, with that in mind, let them do as much as possible and listen as little as possible. After 30 seconds, many of your audience will have stopped listening anyway, and very little if any of what you go on to say will be heard, let alone understood. Don't waste your time!





Only having 30 seconds to talk can make life easier if you are privately anxious about speaking, or concerned about saying the wrong thing, as it reduces the chance of making a mistake. Being time limited forces you to think carefully beforehand about what you are going to say. The outcome should be reduced waffle and getting to the point more quickly. Children like this simplicity. It is also worth bearing in mind that in chillier climates, players will get cold very quickly if they are standing round listening to you for more than a short period.

Just 30 seconds really only gives you the chance to pick up one point from the activity the players have been doing – a good thing in itself. While you are observing them, think about what you want to say. This can be praise or encouragement, or it can be to offer a suggestion to a common problem that is occurring. Use your 30 seconds to laser in on just one. That single message is far more likely to get through into their little heads if it is on its own.

One trick to increase attention levels is to get young players as attentive as possible before you start talking, simply by asking them to be quiet, or standing silently waiting for them to quiet down. The rule is not always practical, though. Sometimes, when you are introducing something new, you will have to talk to the players for longer. In these situations, make sure you involve the players either by asking questions, giving them a break from your voice – or by getting volunteers to demonstrate. But if you can do it in 30 seconds – congratulations!

## 2. WHEN AND HOW TO CORRECT MISTAKES

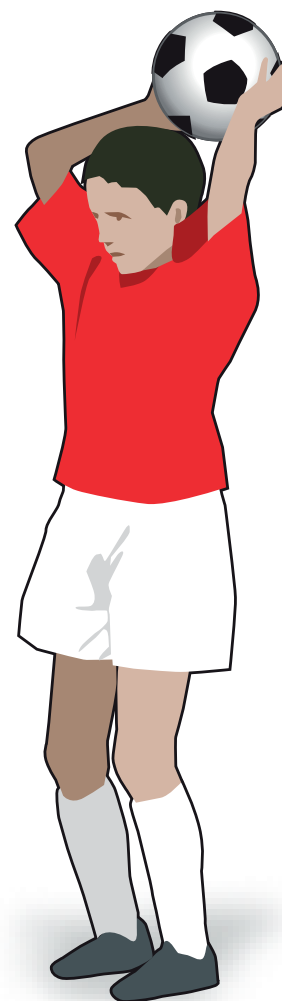
If a young player is making a mistake, we feel duty bound to do something about it. However, we shouldn't always step in. Young people learn from their mistakes by themselves and from feedback from their peers. They don't want or need an adult telling them every time they don't get something right, or as good as it should be – they know!

You may notice as you start coaching young children that youngsters can be intimidated by corrections. The action of correcting can be counterproductive in itself, with some players not taking on board what they need to change.

There are some things that we must correct. Anything that can harm the player or someone else, such as kicking, punching, verbal abuse or any other sort of foul play. These are non-negotiable. Do not hesitate to blow the whistle to stop play and highlight the actions of the offender, so that everyone is aware of the issue and can learn.

Other areas we might correct are discretionary. Technical errors, such as taking the ball behind the head for a throw-in, for example. More difficult might be decision-making errors such as wrong options. This is problematic because there are often a number of options.

Most people don't like criticism or corrections at all, let alone in front of others, and children are no different. If at all possible, take the player aside on a one-to-one basis to make a comment. If parents are nearby, you might feel it is appropriate to make the point in their presence. One or two words may be enough, but the key is to "talk" and not raise your voice.



## 3. COACH BY GENTLE QUESTIONING

Research shows that learning comes from self-discovery. This means players realise how to solve problems and react to situations by finding their own solutions. Coaches should try to reduce the amount of time they spend "telling" the players what to do. Instead, through questioning, they should look to empower their players.

To aid good learning the coach needs to communicate well verbally. The choice of words is often not as important as the way they are told. Remember:

- Don't use jargon or sarcasm.
- Promote positive comments.
- Back up criticism with a way forward.
- Keep sentences short.
- Don't make too many points.
- Summarise at the end – some players may not have understood the first time around.

---

## Gentle questioning

Asking questions is useful because it:

- Gains the attention of the players.
- Lets the coach learn what the players know.
- Involves the players in the learning process.
- Allows the players to express their opinions.
- Helps the coach check for understanding.

## Asking the best questions

- Use open questions – questions that cannot be answered with just “yes” or “no”. Start questions with words, like “what”, “how” or “where”.
- Don’t use “why”, because it can be construed as negative.
- Wait for the answer, don’t hurry the player.
- Listen, don’t anticipate the answer. Try not to rephrase the answer once given.

## When to “tell” and when to “question”

Tell when:

- You have a short period of time to get your point across.
- Specific instructions are needed. For instance, health and safety issues or laws of the game.
- A larger group makes question and answer sessions unwieldy.

Question to:

- Check your players’ understanding.
- Gain feedback.
- Improve your players’ learning.





# USING YOUR EASICOACH ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

## 6 STEPS TO EASICOACH SUCCESS

1. Find the activity and game you need.
2. Look at the pictures and read the text.
3. Check what equipment you'll need when you get to the club.
4. Take the book to training.
5. Set up your activity.
6. EasiCoach it!

The second page is a game that will enable your players to put into practise what they learned in the activity

Each game is explained clearly, giving you all the elements required to run the game successfully

The first page is the activity. The title tells you the skill that the players will develop by doing this activity

The age group the activity has been written for along with the skills category that the activity belongs to and its place in that category

The name of the activity – you can tell this to your players: "Today we're going to play..."

CALL OUT gives you some key phrases to tell your players as they do the activity, to help them understand what they should be doing and how they should be doing it

Each activity is explained simply and clearly, step by step

Detailed illustrations show how the skills should be performed

HOW MANY PLAYERS DO I NEED tells you the ideal number of players required to run the activity so that you adapt to the number players who arrive at training

GAME PLAY gives you the vital elements of the game that you should look out for in your players

The diagrams show you what the activity should look like on the pitch. There might be one, two or three diagrams – whatever makes it easiest for you to understand

The KEY helps you understand the diagram – which way the players are running and where the ball is going



# EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

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## U7

### BALL CONTROL

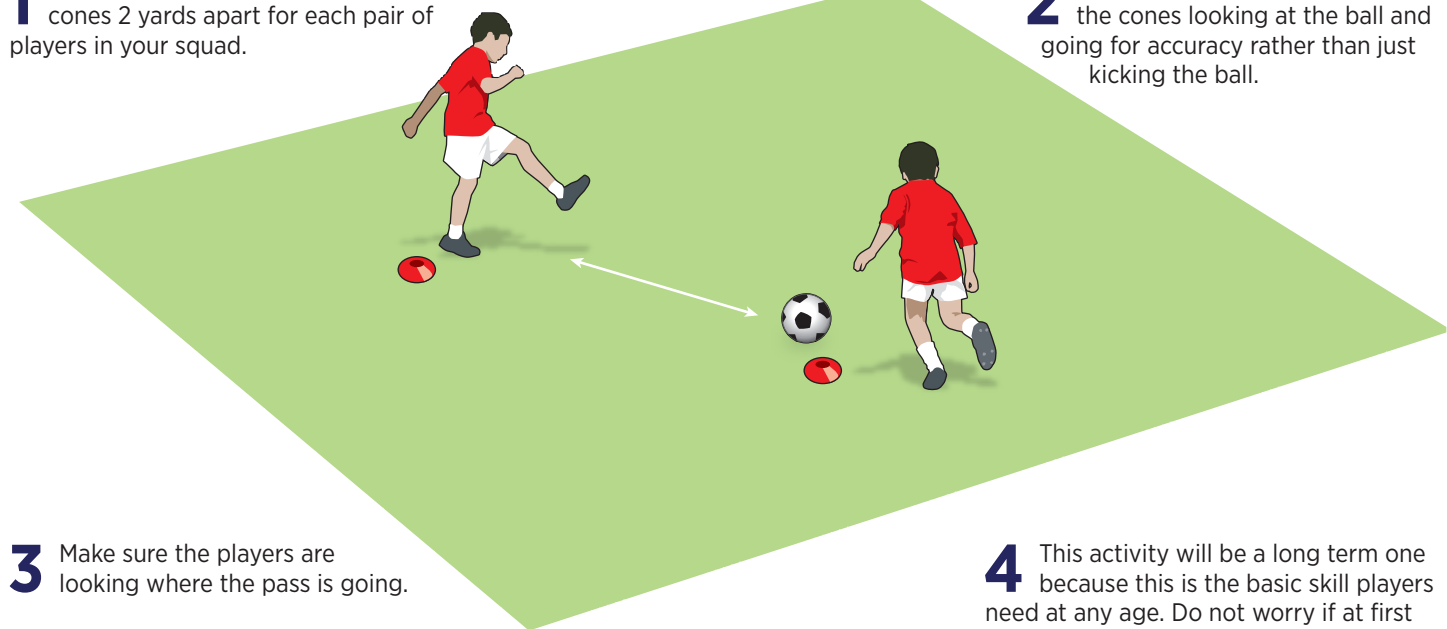
# Pass the ball 2 yards to a team mate

## ACTIVITY: PASSING PAIRS

**CALL OUT** "Look to where the pass is going" • "Use the inside of the foot"

**1** Split your squad into pairs. Set up two cones 2 yards apart for each pair of players in your squad.

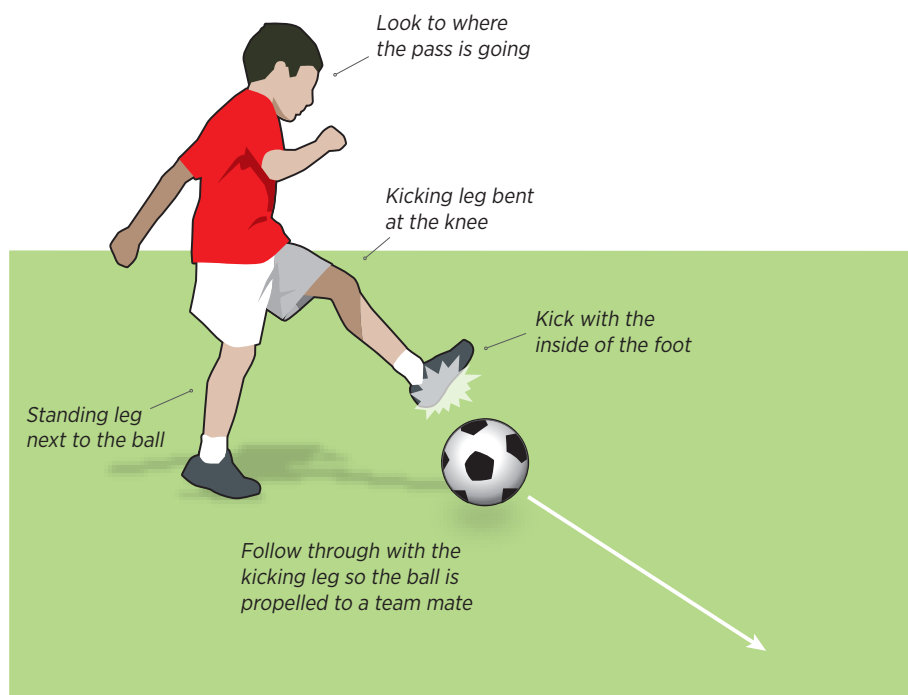
**2** Players pass to and fro between the cones looking at the ball and going for accuracy rather than just kicking the ball.



**3** Make sure the players are looking where the pass is going.

**4** This activity will be a long term one because this is the basic skill players need at any age. Do not worry if at first the players are doing things like stopping the ball with their hands. By the third week the players should understand the best way to receive and pass over short distances is with the inside of the foot.

### Passing the ball



**5** Run this activity for a few minutes reminding the players all the time of the call outs.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

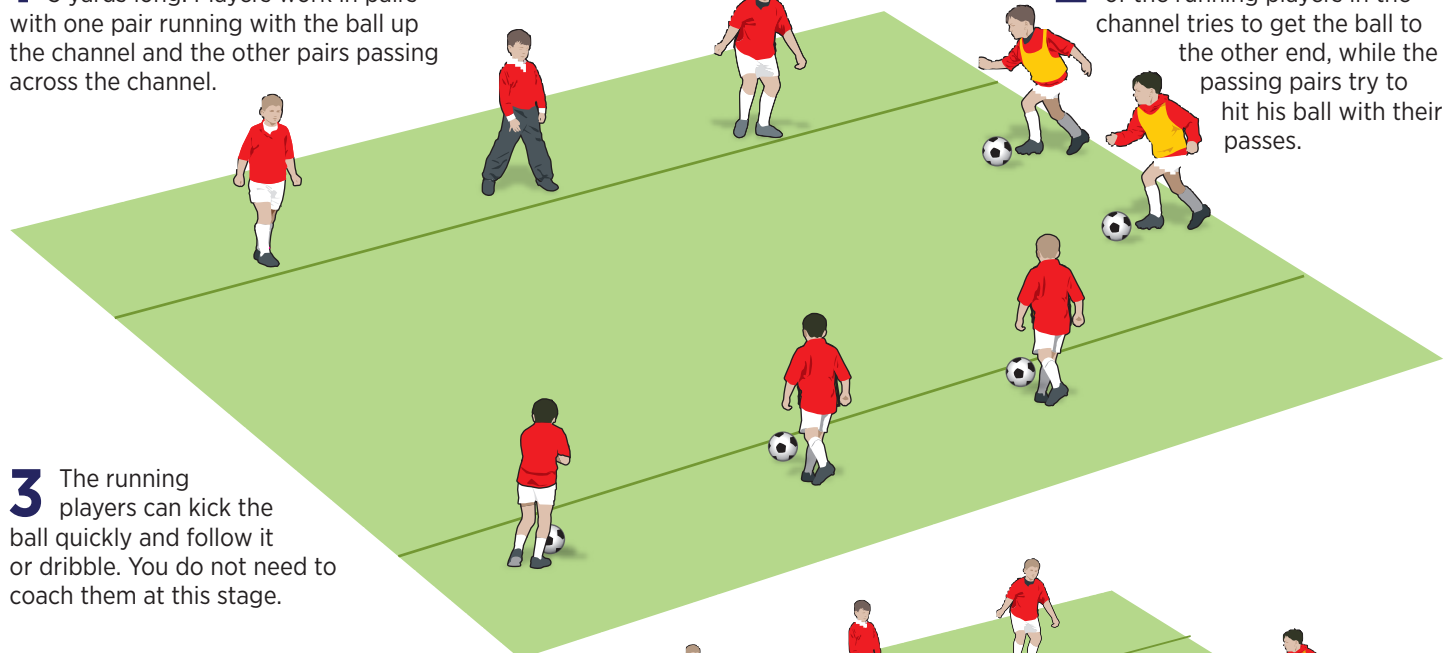
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	→
	--->	→

# Pass the ball 2 yards to a team mate

**GAME: GUARD OF HONOUR**

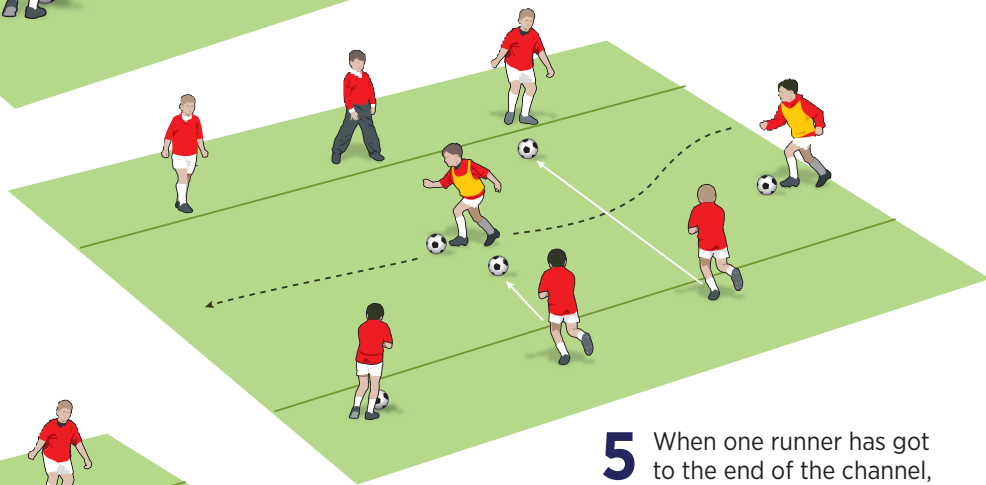
**CALL OUT** "Look to where the pass is going" • "Use the inside of the foot"

**1** Mark out a channel 2 yards wide and 5 yards long. Players work in pairs with one pair running with the ball up the channel and the other pairs passing across the channel.

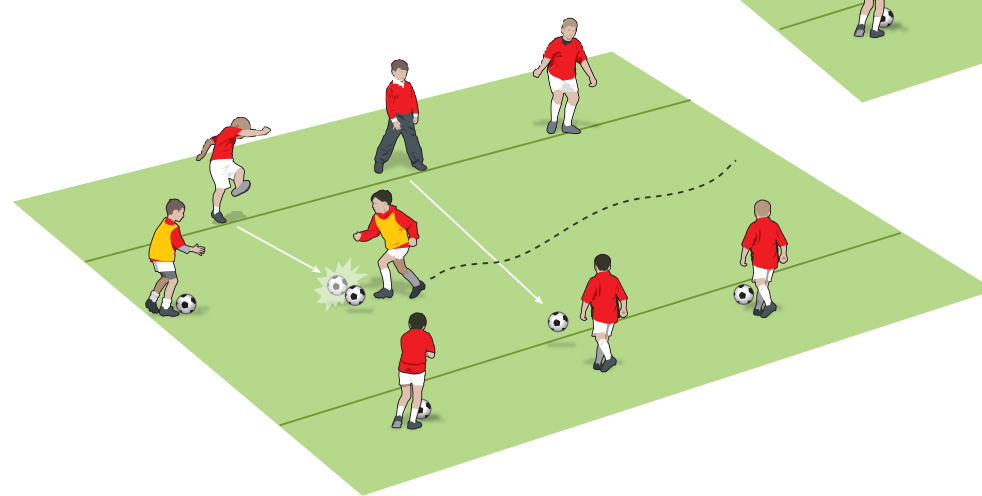


**2** When you say "go", the first of the running players in the channel tries to get the ball to the other end, while the passing pairs try to hit his ball with their passes.

**3** The running players can kick the ball quickly and follow it or dribble. You do not need to coach them at this stage.



**4** The passing players' technique is put under pressure as they try to hit the ball of the running player. Correct technique is vital even though they will be eager to knock the runner's ball.



**5** When one runner has got to the end of the channel, the other player can run the gauntlet. Change the runners when they have got to the end and back twice.

**GAME PLAY**  
Players concentrate on accuracy of the pass.  
Excitement will add to the pressure – allow them to enjoy it.  
Passing, dribbling and accuracy are the key elements.

## How many players do I need?

This game uses eight players, but different numbers will work if you change the length of the channel.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→	→
	→	→
	→	→

# Receive and control the ball

## ACTIVITY: CUSHION AND STOP

### CALL OUT

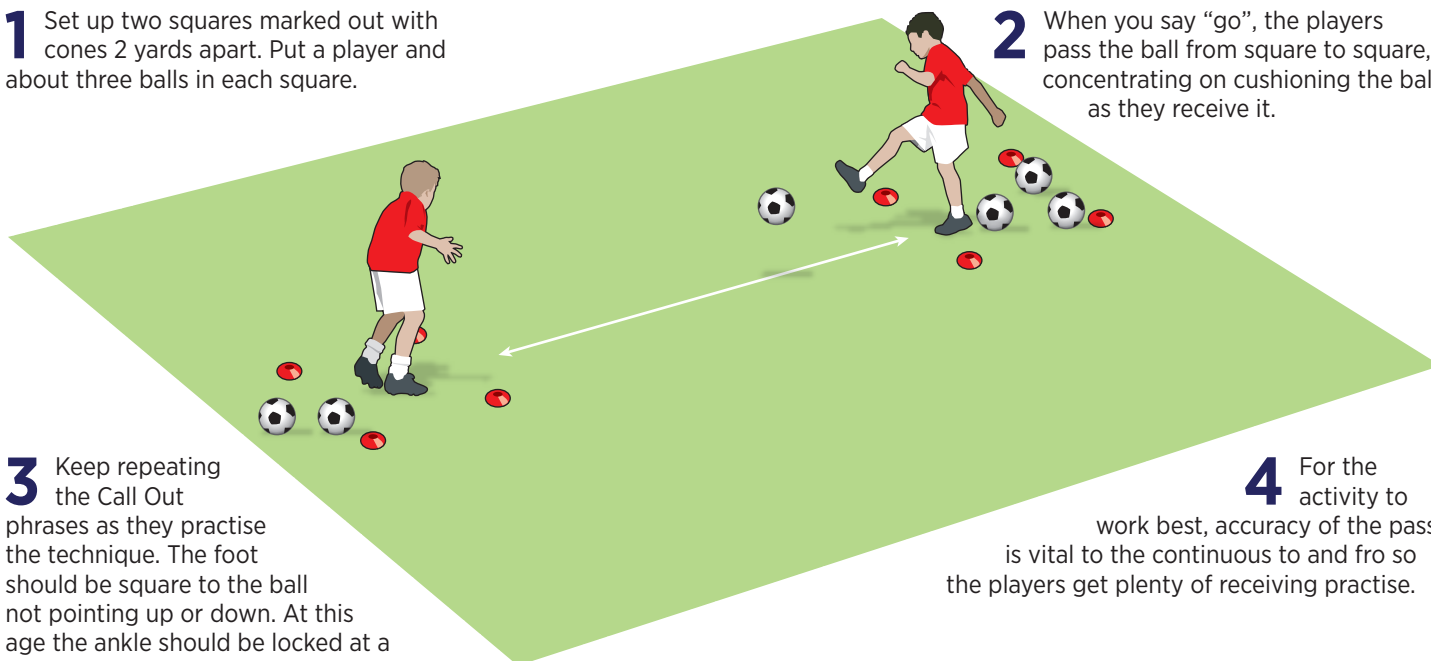
“Call for the ball” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Use the inside of the foot to cushion the ball”

**1** Set up two squares marked out with cones 2 yards apart. Put a player and about three balls in each square.

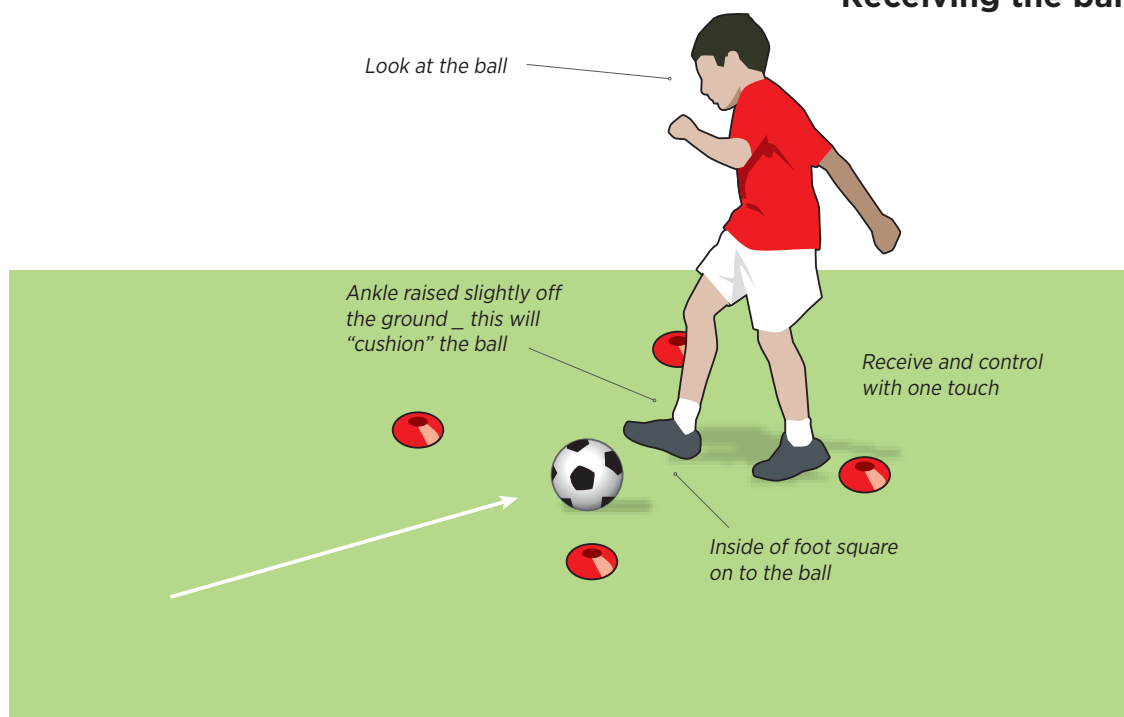
**2** When you say “go”, the players pass the ball from square to square, concentrating on cushioning the ball as they receive it.

**3** Keep repeating the Call Out phrases as they practise the technique. The foot should be square to the ball not pointing up or down. At this age the ankle should be locked at a right angle.

**4** For the activity to work best, accuracy of the pass is vital to the continuous to and fro so the players get plenty of receiving practise.



### Receiving the ball



### How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	--->	—>

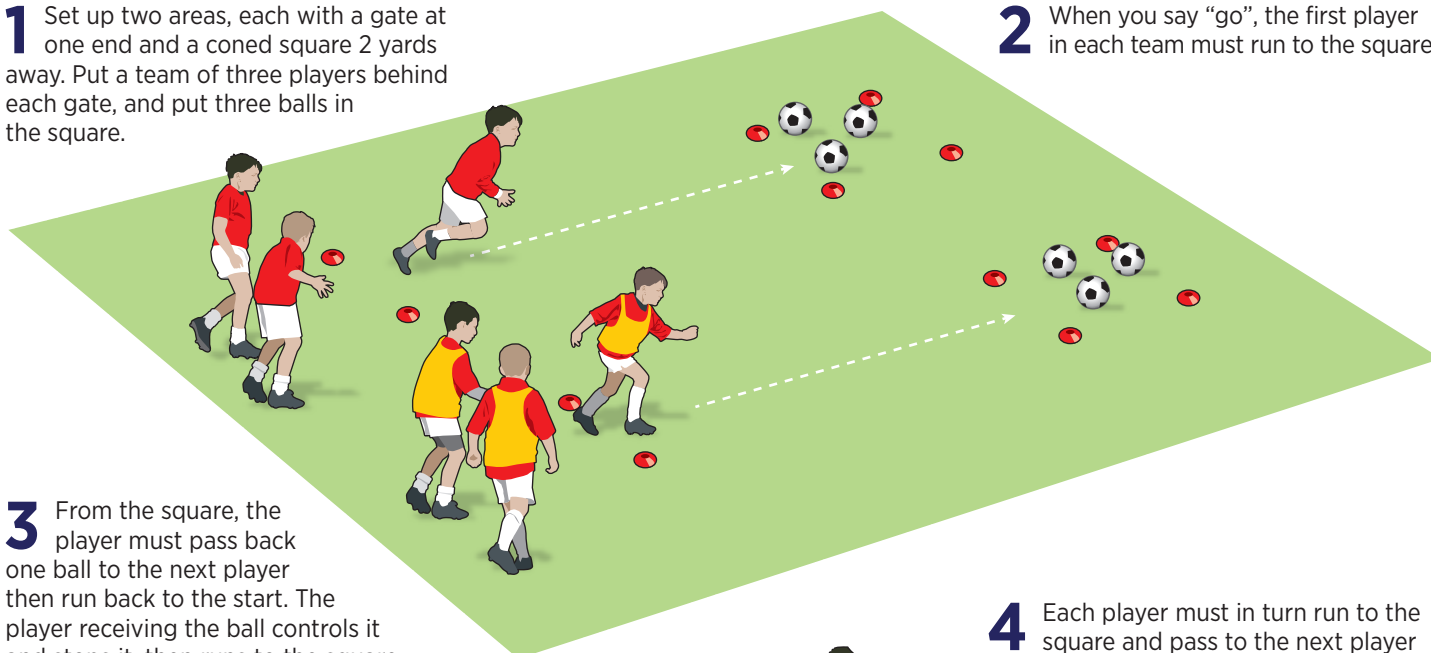
# Receive and control the ball

## GAME: EMPTY THE TANK

### CALL OUT

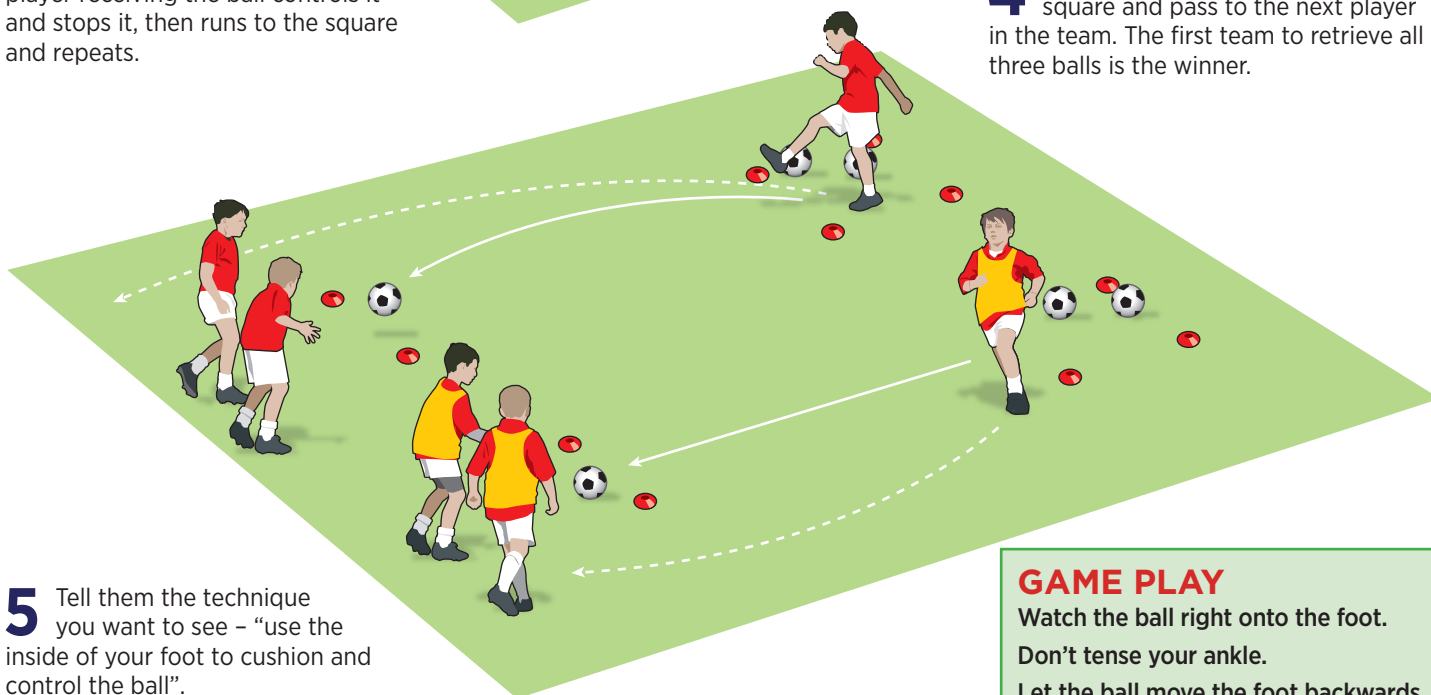
“Call for the ball” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Use the inside of the foot to cushion the ball”

**1** Set up two areas, each with a gate at one end and a coned square 2 yards away. Put a team of three players behind each gate, and put three balls in the square.



**2** When you say “go”, the first player in each team must run to the square.

**3** From the square, the player must pass back one ball to the next player then run back to the start. The player receiving the ball controls it and stops it, then runs to the square and repeats.



**4** Each player must in turn run to the square and pass to the next player in the team. The first team to retrieve all three balls is the winner.

**5** Tell them the technique you want to see – “use the inside of your foot to cushion and control the ball”.

### GAME PLAY

Watch the ball right onto the foot.  
Don't tense your ankle.  
Let the ball move the foot backwards – “cushioning”.  
Use a quick second touch to get control.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in small groups. Here we have two groups of three players, but you can race more teams against each other if you have large numbers.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

# Dribble with a ball 5 yards in a straight line

## ACTIVITY: DRIBBLE RELAYS

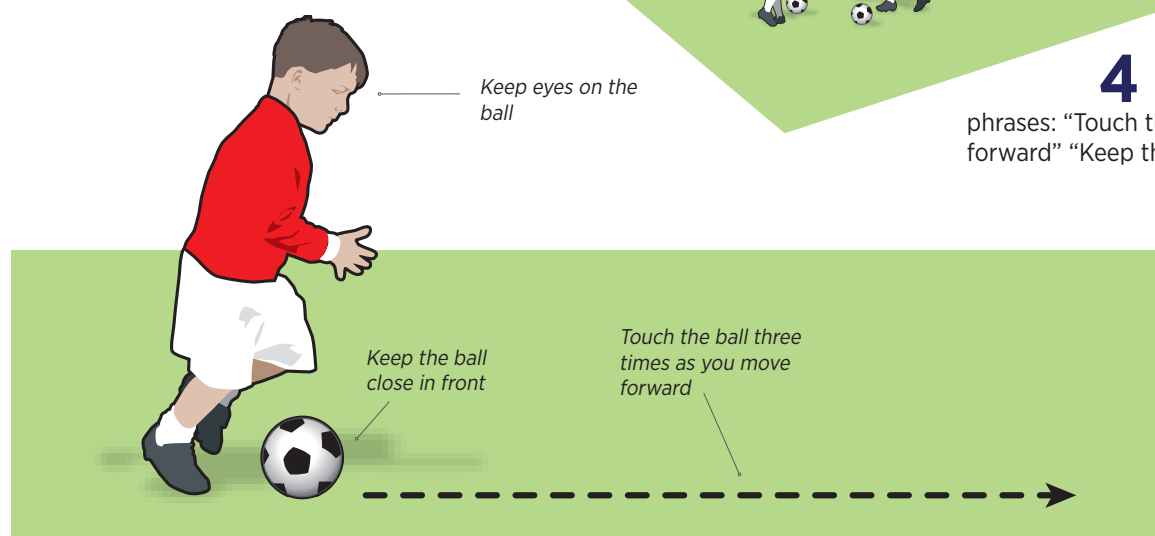
**CALL OUT** "Touch the ball three times to move forward" • "Keep the ball close in front of you"

**1** Set up two cones 5 yards apart for each group. Put two players behind each cone. Each player has a ball.

**2** This activity is run like a relay – when you say "go", the first player dribbles the ball from one cone to the other. When he gets there, the next player dribbles back and the sequence continues like that.

**3** Players should be taking at least three touches of the ball to control it and get it across to the opposite cone.

### Dribbling the ball



**4** Make sure you encourage players with the Call Out phrases: "Touch the ball three times to move forward" "Keep the ball close in front of you".

### How many players do I need?

We used eight players for this continuous game, but you can adapt it for greater or fewer numbers.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	—>

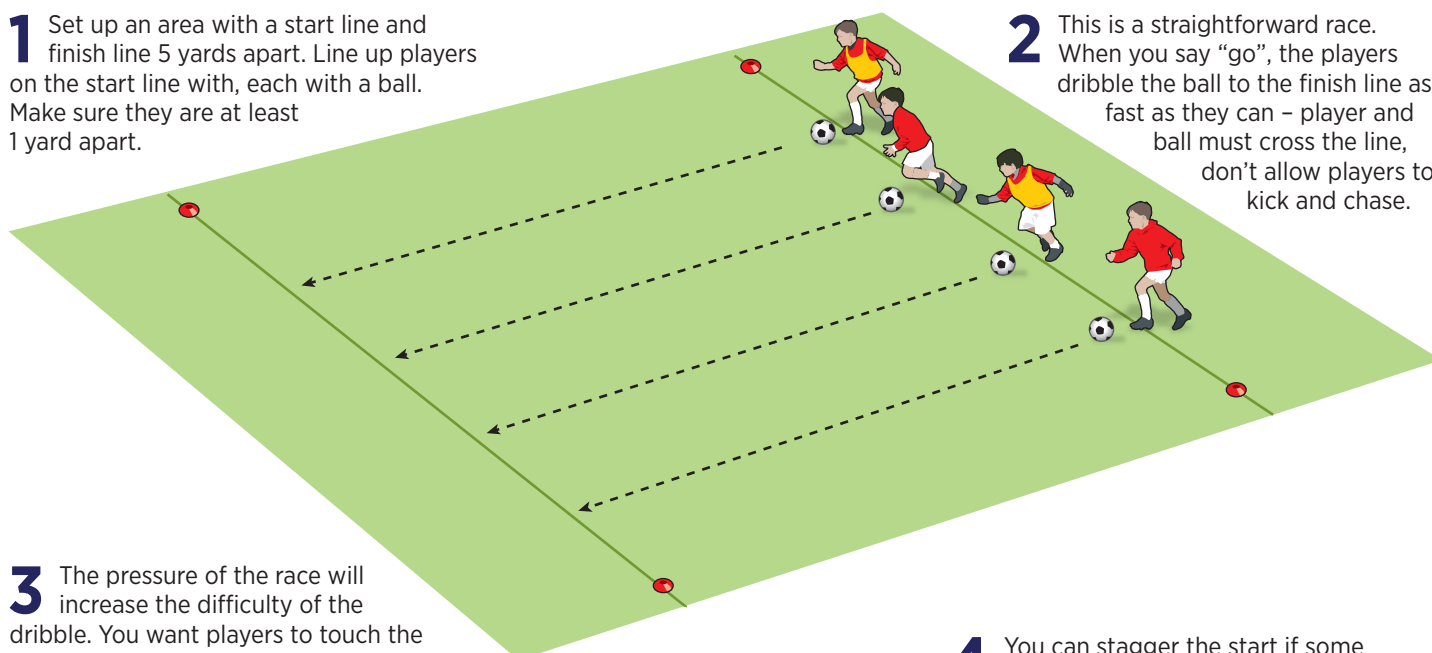


# Dribble with a ball 5 yards in a straight line

## GAME: DRIBBLE RACE

**CALL OUT** "Touch the ball three times to move forward" • "Keep the ball close in front of you"

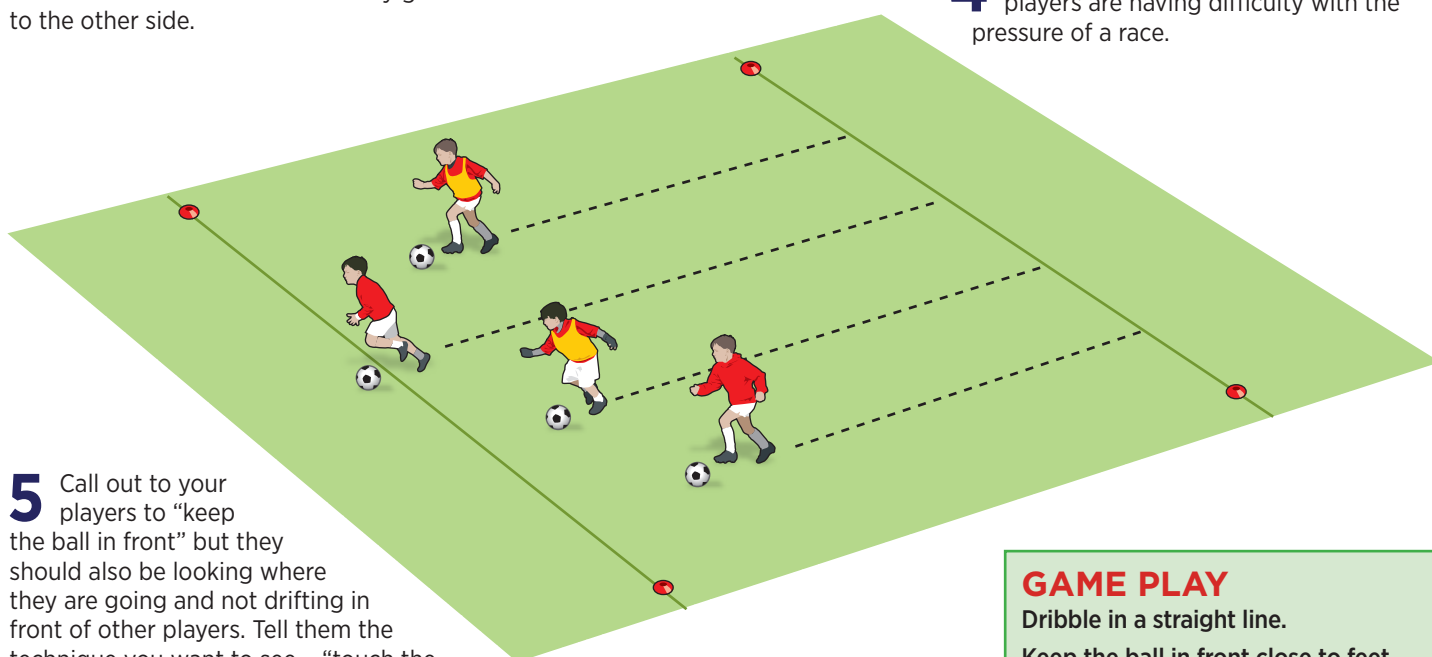
**1** Set up an area with a start line and finish line 5 yards apart. Line up players on the start line with, each with a ball. Make sure they are at least 1 yard apart.



**2** This is a straightforward race. When you say "go", the players dribble the ball to the finish line as fast as they can – player and ball must cross the line, don't allow players to kick and chase.

**3** The pressure of the race will increase the difficulty of the dribble. You want players to touch the ball at least three times before they get to the other side.

**4** You can stagger the start if some players are having difficulty with the pressure of a race.



**5** Call out to your players to "keep the ball in front" but they should also be looking where they are going and not drifting in front of other players. Tell them the technique you want to see – "touch the ball three times".

### GAME PLAY

Dribble in a straight line.  
Keep the ball in front close to feet.  
Touch the ball to move and guide it.  
Praise good dribbling not just winners.

### How many players do I need?

This can be played with any number of players, as long as you can give them enough space. We used four players in our activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)

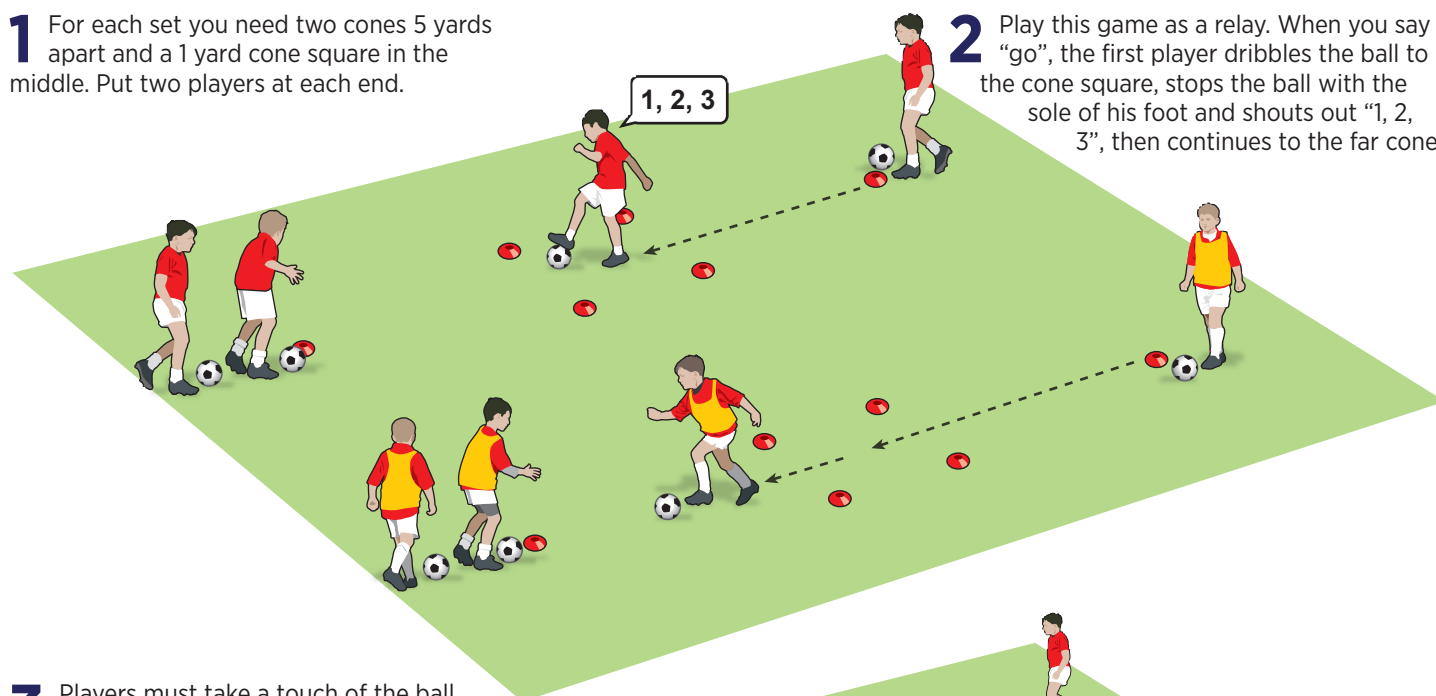
# Dribble 5 yards, stopping half way

## ACTIVITY: DRIBBLE AND STOP

**CALL OUT** "Touch the ball to move forward" • "Stop with the sole of your foot on top of the ball"

**1** For each set you need two cones 5 yards apart and a 1 yard cone square in the middle. Put two players at each end.

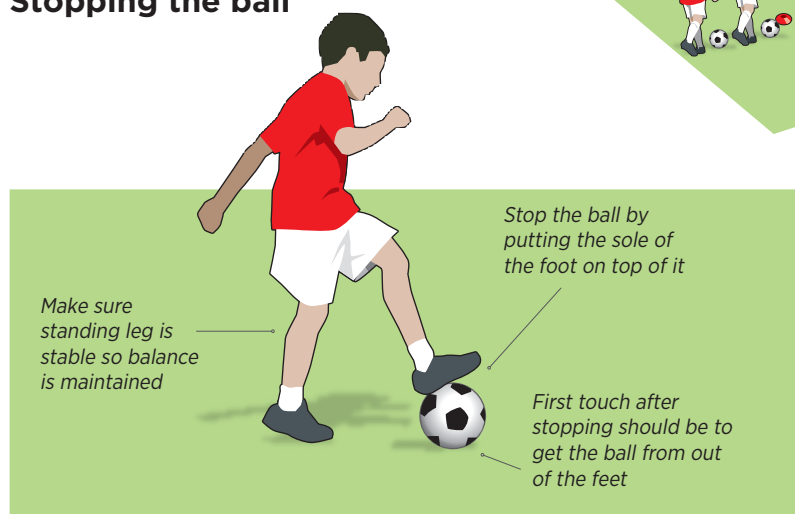
**2** Play this game as a relay. When you say "go", the first player dribbles the ball to the cone square, stops the ball with the sole of his foot and shouts out "1, 2, 3", then continues to the far cone.



**3** Players must take a touch of the ball to start it moving and keep it out from under their feet.



### Stopping the ball



**4** Don't worry if most of your players have trouble stopping the ball at first, eventually they will get the skill.

**5** Make sure you encourage players with the Call Out phrases: "Touch the ball to move forward" "Stop with the sole of your foot on top of the ball".

### How many players do I need?

Players work in groups of three or four.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

# Dribble 5 yards, stopping half way

**GAME: COLOURED CONES**

**CALL OUT** "Touch the ball to move forward" • "Stop with the sole of your foot on top of the ball"

**1** Set up a 10 x 10 yards area using four different coloured cones - one on each corner. Players have a ball each.

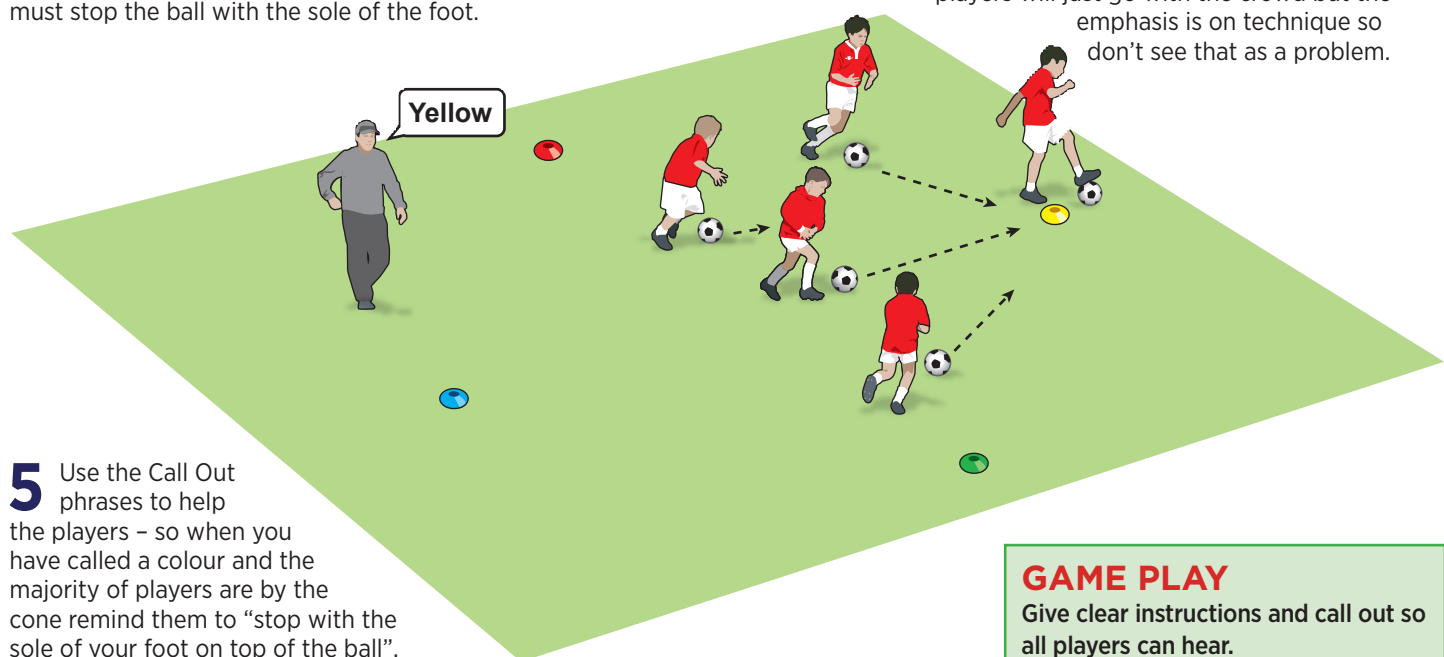
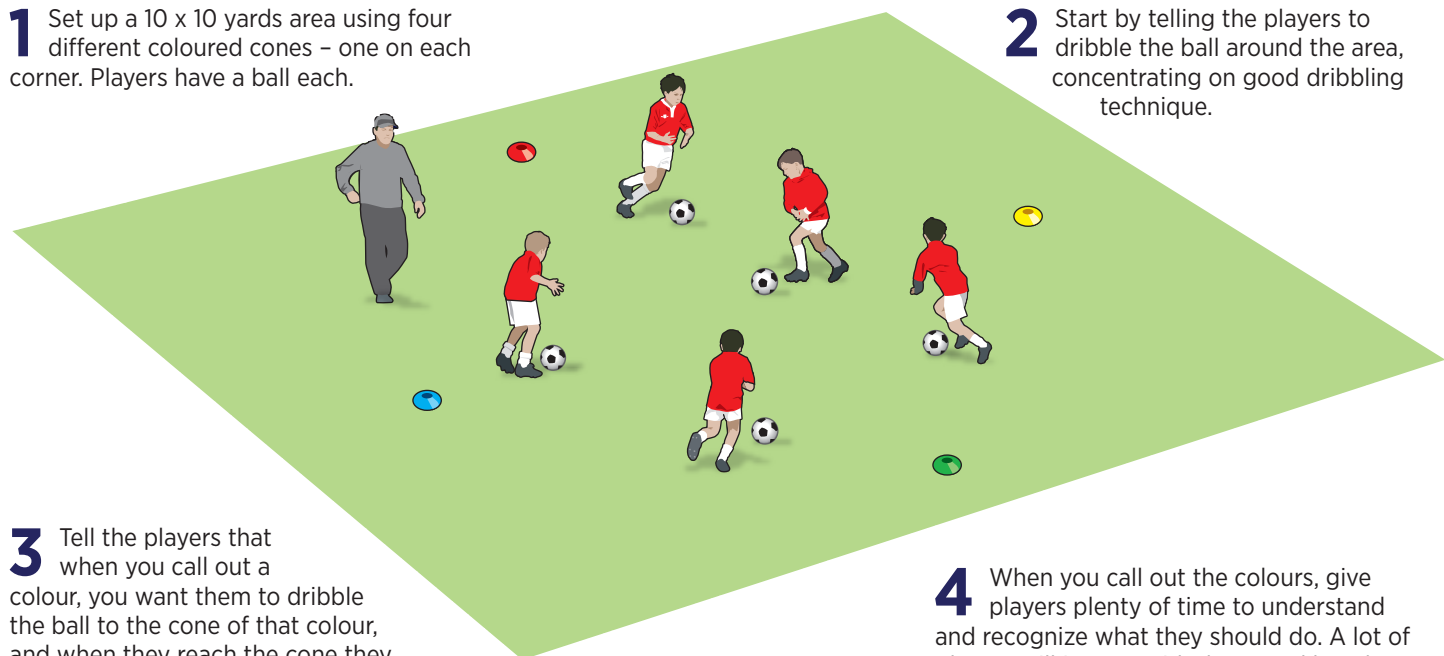
**2** Start by telling the players to dribble the ball around the area, concentrating on good dribbling technique.

**3** Tell the players that when you call out a colour, you want them to dribble the ball to the cone of that colour, and when they reach the cone they must stop the ball with the sole of the foot.

**4** When you call out the colours, give players plenty of time to understand and recognize what they should do. A lot of players will just go with the crowd but the emphasis is on technique so don't see that as a problem.

**5** Use the Call Out phrases to help the players - so when you have called a colour and the majority of players are by the cone remind them to "stop with the sole of your foot on top of the ball".

**6** Play for 5 minutes making sure players are push-starting the ball again with the side of the foot to get it in front of them.



**GAME PLAY**  
Give clear instructions and call out so all players can hear.  
Keep the ball in front close to feet.  
Touch the ball to move and guide it.  
Praise good dribbling.

**How many players do I need?**  
Up to five players in the area. Bigger area if you have more players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot



# EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

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## U7

### ATTACKING

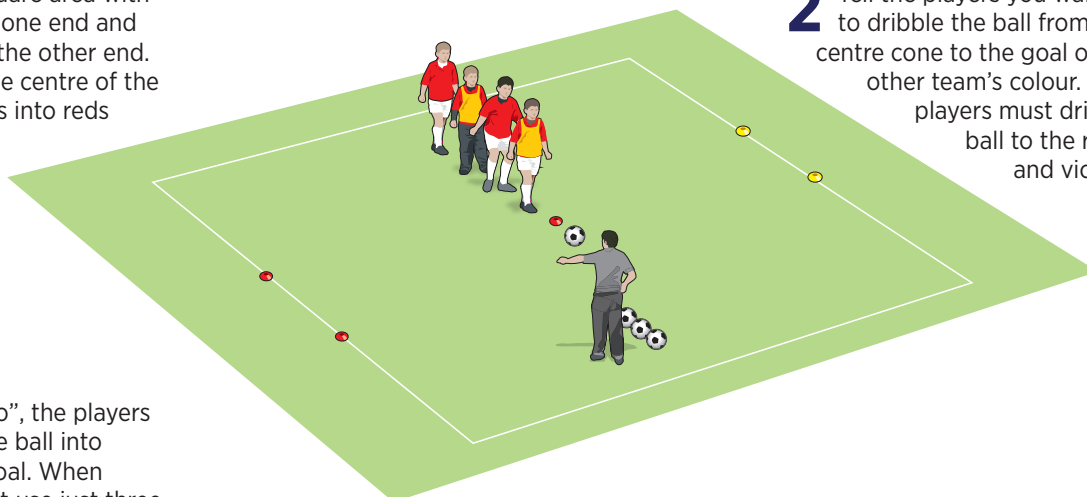
# Know the direction of play

## ACTIVITY: DRIBBLE TO THE CONE

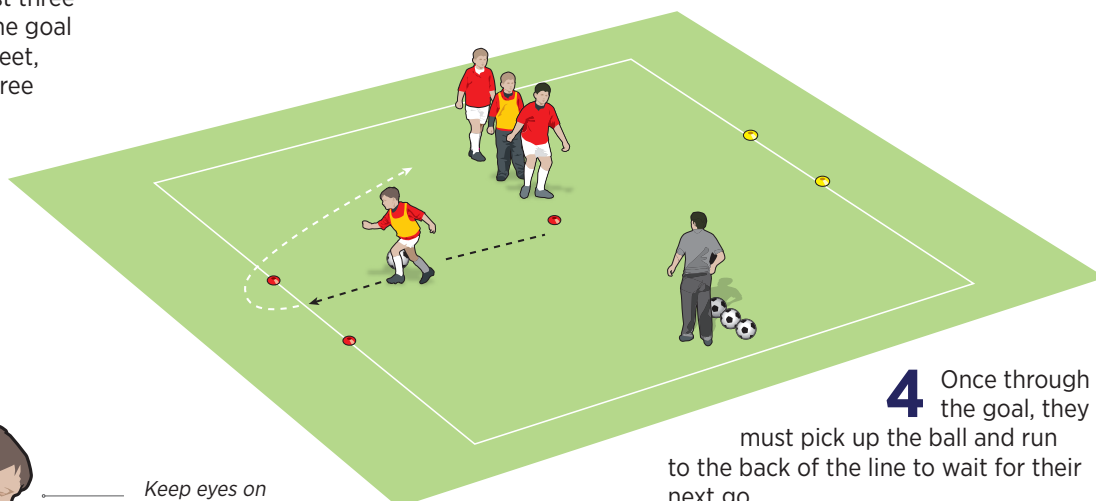
**CALL OUT** "Understand that to score the ball must go towards the opposition goal"

**1** Set up a 5 yard square area with a red cone goal at one end and a yellow cone goal at the other end. Put a single cone in the centre of the area. Split your players into reds and yellows and line them up behind the centre cone.

**2** Tell the players you want them to dribble the ball from the centre cone to the goal of the other team's colour. So yellow players must dribble the ball to the red goal and vice versa.

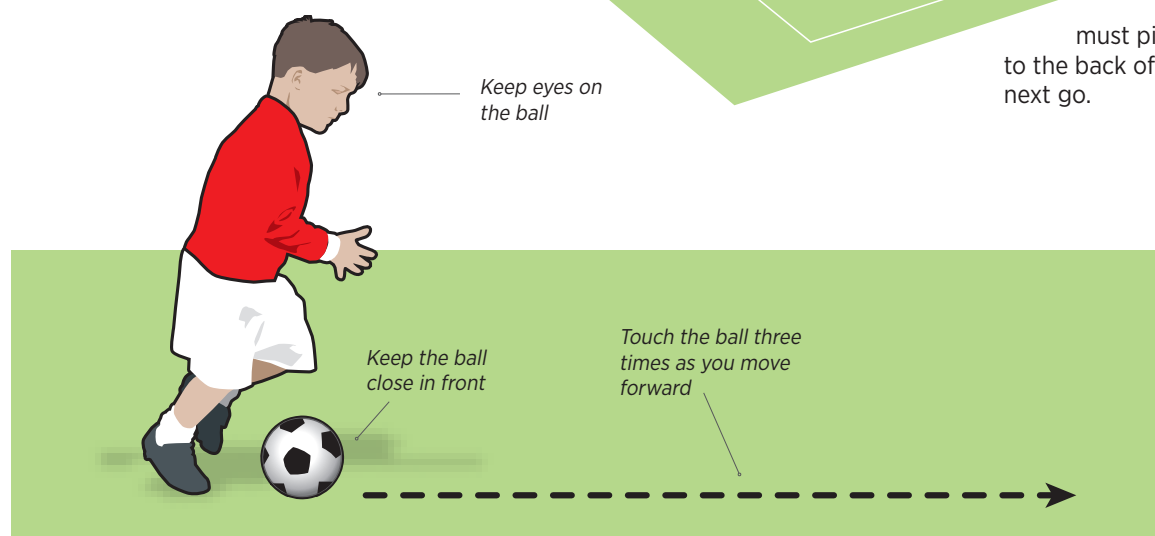


**3** When you say "go", the players should dribble the ball into the opposite colour goal. When dribbling, players must use just three touches of the ball to get to the goal – one to get it out from their feet, two to move it forward and three for direction.



### Dribbling the ball

**4** Once through the goal, they must pick up the ball and run to the back of the line to wait for their next go.



### How many players do I need?

Have four to six players lining up ready to go. If you have any more in the line, those at the back will lose their concentration.

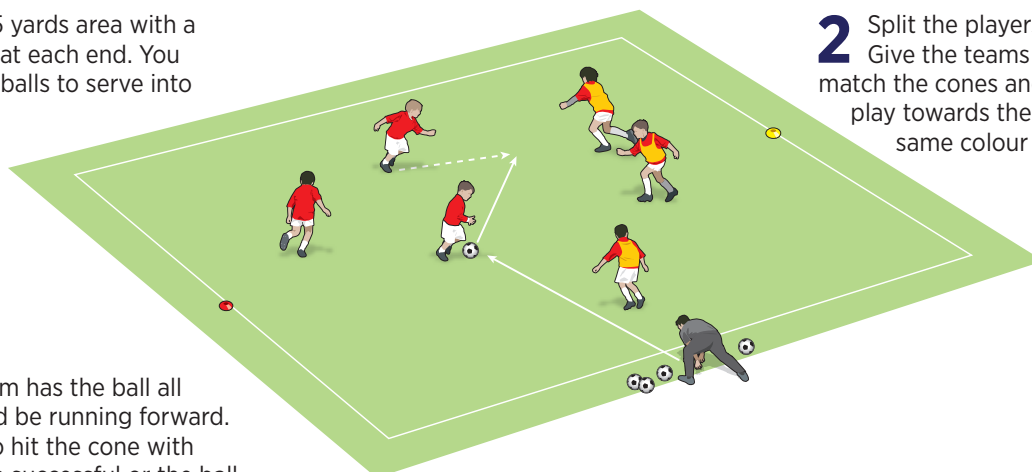
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	—>

# Know the direction of play

**GAME: 3v3 TO THE CONE**

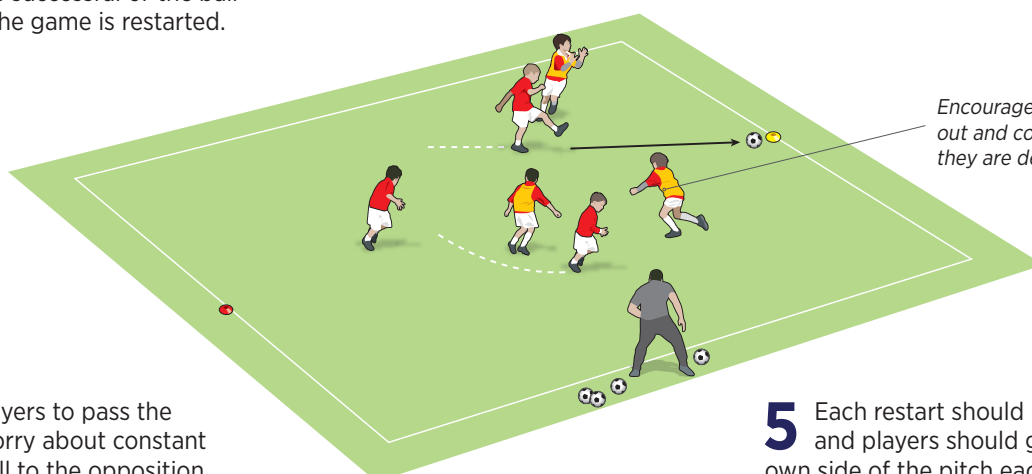
**CALL OUT** "Understand that to score the ball must go towards the opposition goal"

**1** Set up a 15 x 15 yards area with a coloured cone at each end. You need a number of balls to serve into the game.



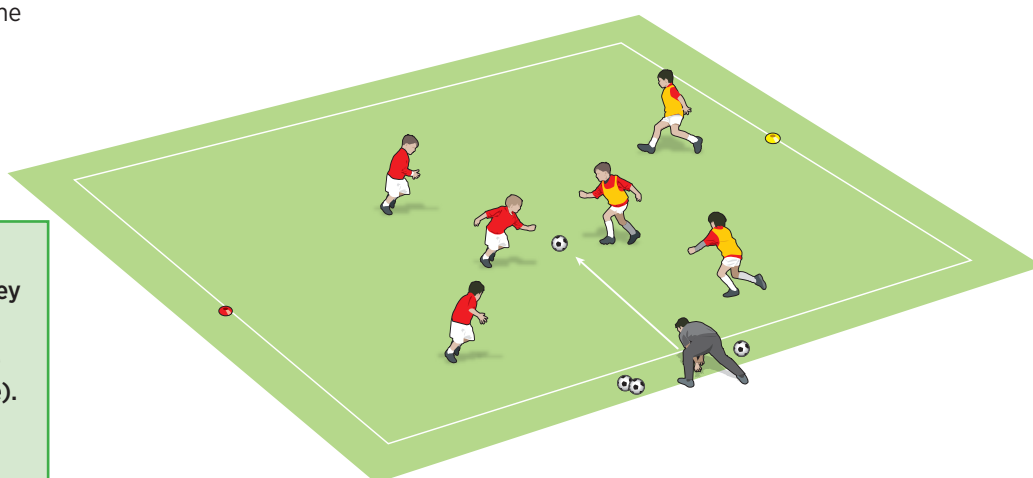
**2** Split the players into two teams. Give the teams coloured bibs that match the cones and explain that they play towards the cone that is the same colour as the other team.

**3** When the team has the ball all players should be running forward. They are aiming to hit the cone with the ball. If they are successful or the ball goes out of play, the game is restarted.



**4** Try to get players to pass the ball. Don't worry about constant turnover of the ball to the opposition because it will happen a lot in a game like this at this age group.

**5** Each restart should be from the coach and players should get back into their own side of the pitch each time.



**GAME PLAY**  
Players should know which way they are shooting.  
Ask them the easiest way to get to goal (pass to a team mate in space).  
Look for passing, dribbling and movement.

## How many players do I need?

This game uses six players in a 3v3 but any combinations of numbers will work.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	--->
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	--->

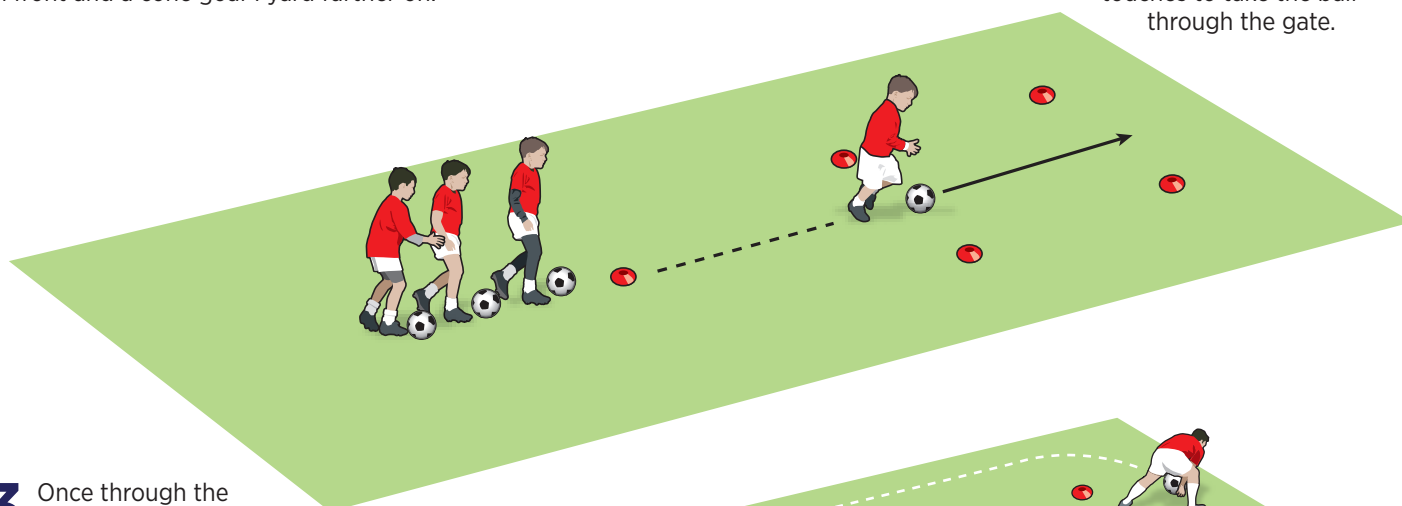
# Dribble forward with the ball towards the opposition goal

## ACTIVITY: DRIBBLE TO THE GOAL

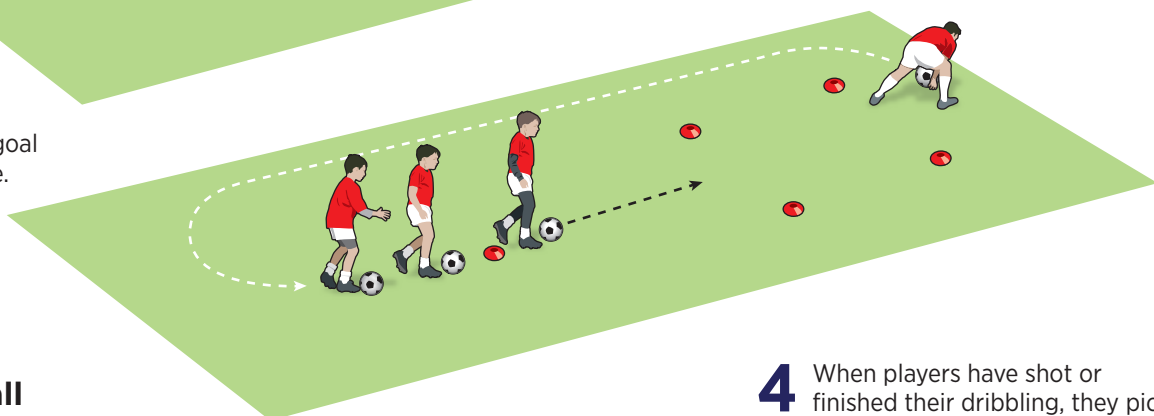
**CALL OUT** "Touch the ball three times" • "Keep the ball close in front of you"

**1** Line up four players behind a starting cone. Put a cone gate 2 yards in front and a cone goal 1 yard further on.

**2** When you say "go" the first player in the line takes three touches to take the ball through the gate.

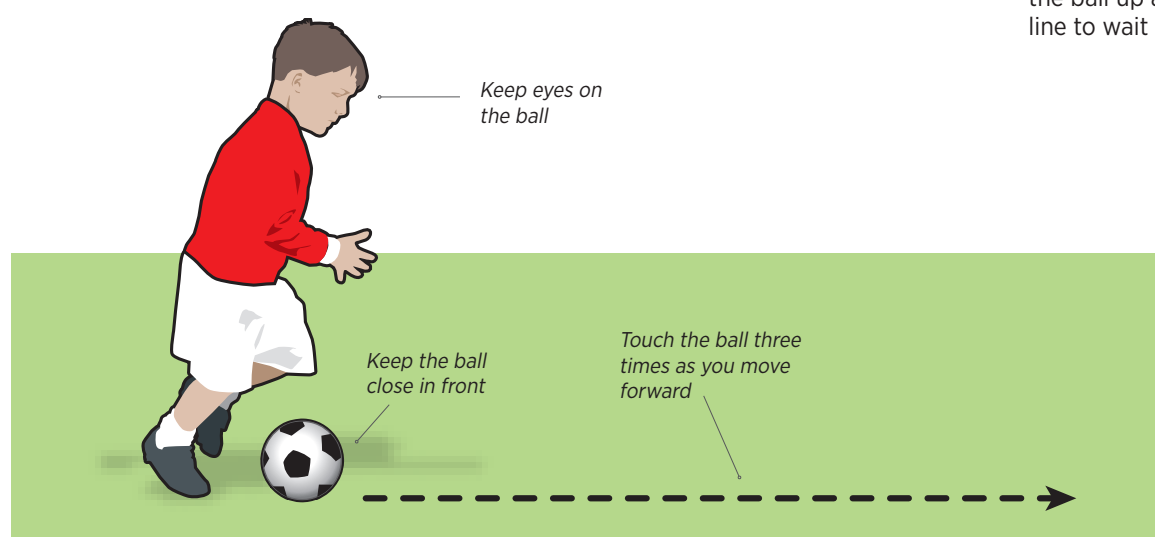


**3** Once through the gate, players can choose to shoot at the goal or continue their dribble.



### Dribbling the ball

**4** When players have shot or finished their dribbling, they pick the ball up and go to the back of the line to wait for another turn.



### How many players do I need?

Four players in each line is the maximum.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	→
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	→



# Dribble forward with the ball towards the opposition goal

**GAME: NUMBER REACT**

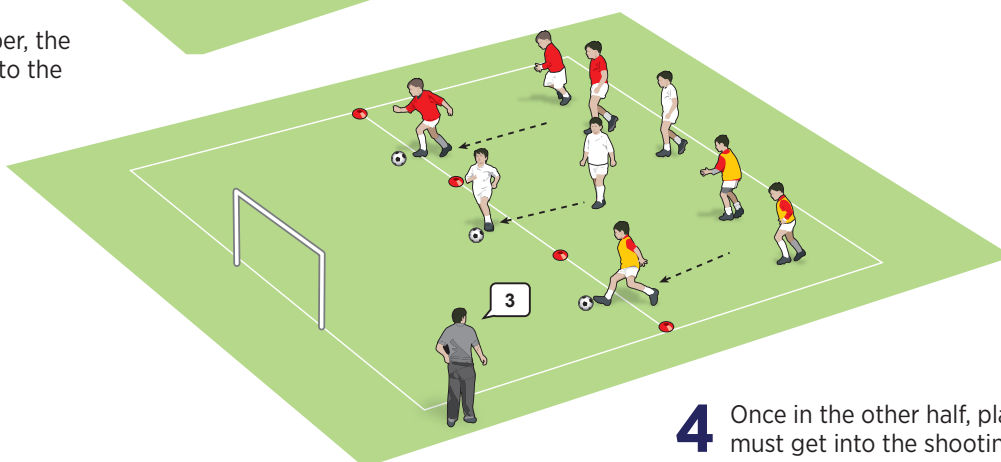
**CALL OUT** "Touch the ball three times" • "Keep the ball close in front of you"

**1** Set up a 12 yard square area with a halfway line and a goal at one end. Split players into three groups of three. Number the players 1, 2 and 3 in each group.

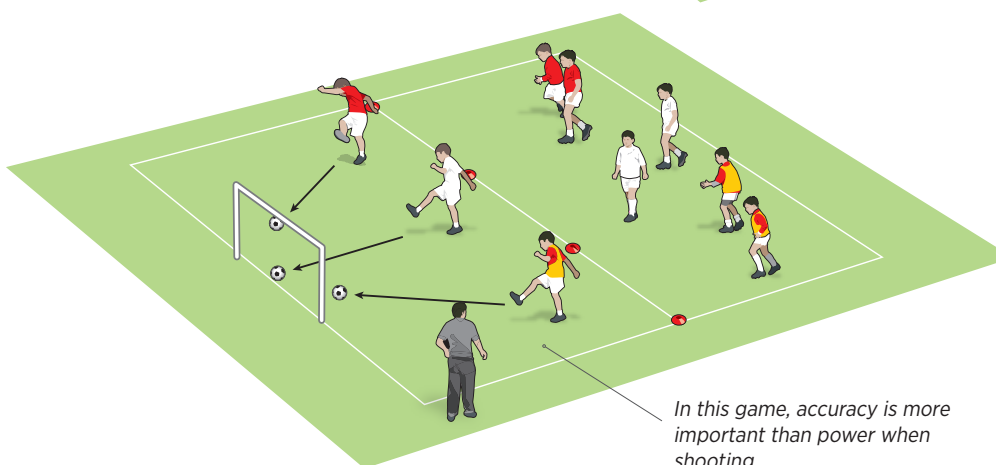


**2** In their groups, players start in one half of the area passing the ball to each other. As they play, they are listening out for the coach to call a number that they must react to. Make sure the players are passing the ball around.

**3** When you call their number, the players dribble the ball into the other half of the area.



**4** Once in the other half, players must get into the shooting position and get a shot on target.



*In this game, accuracy is more important than power when shooting*

### GAME PLAY

Players should know which way they are dribbling.  
Make sure they understand what they have to do.  
Look for dribbling and shooting.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in groups of three, I used three teams of three players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	- - - - - →	→
	Run with the ball	Shot
	- - - - - →	→

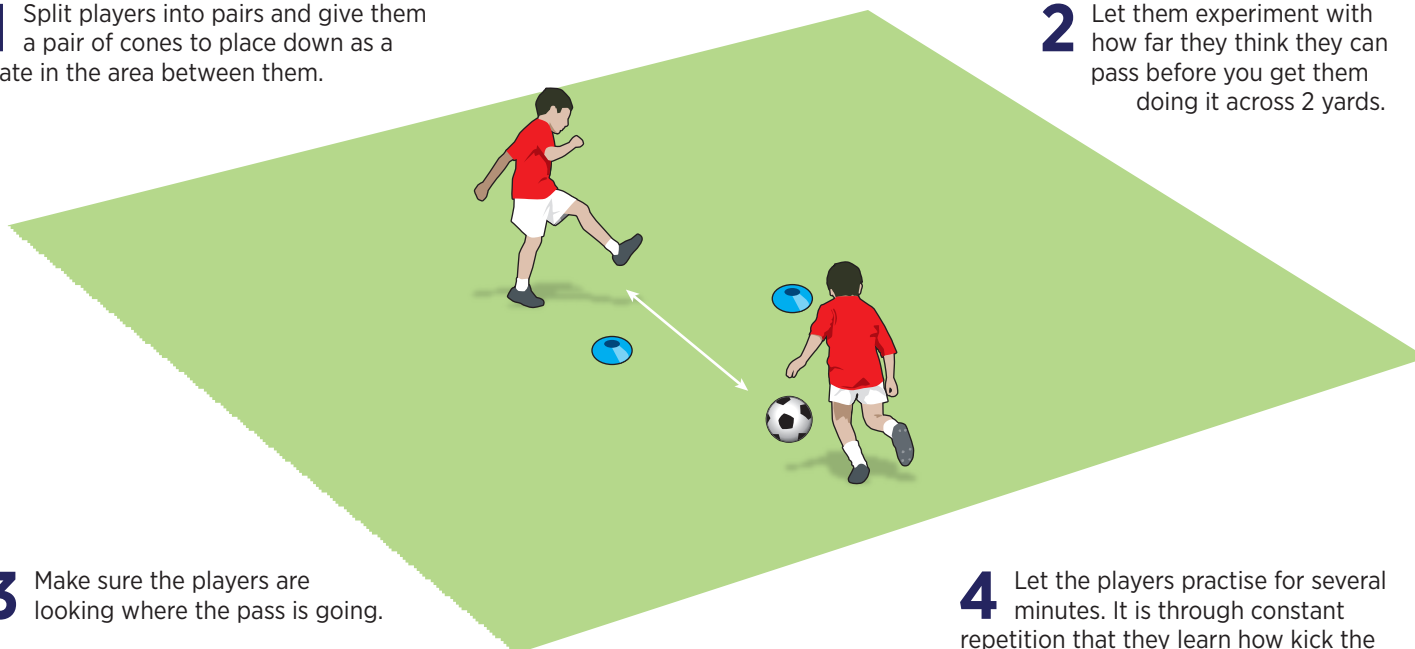
## Pass accurately to a team mate (2 yards)

### ACTIVITY: PASS THROUGH A GATE

**CALL OUT** "Look to where the pass is going" • "Use the inside of the foot"

**1** Split players into pairs and give them a pair of cones to place down as a gate in the area between them.

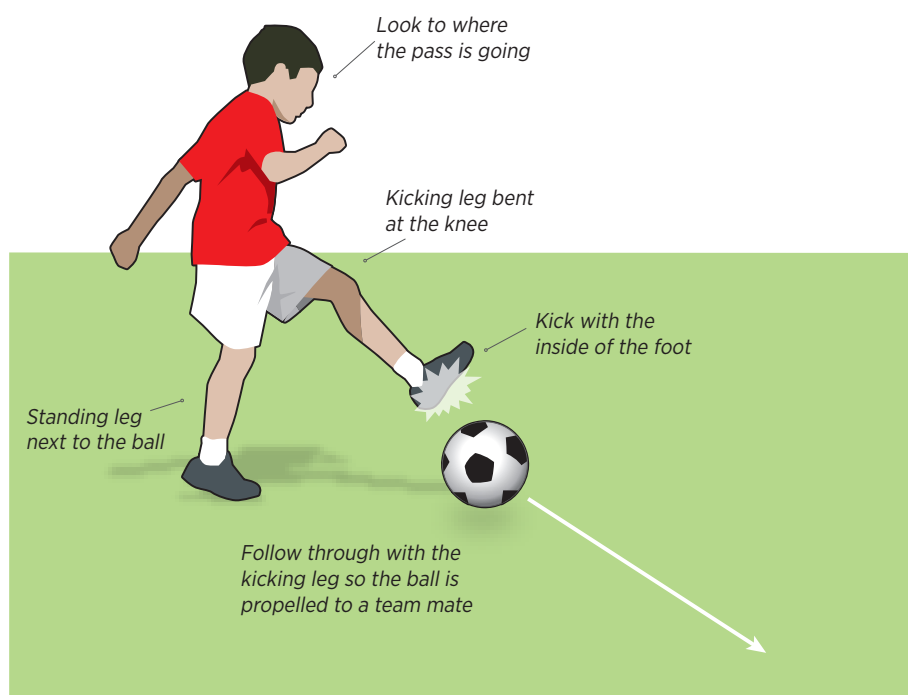
**2** Let them experiment with how far they think they can pass before you get them doing it across 2 yards.



**3** Make sure the players are looking where the pass is going.

**4** Let the players practise for several minutes. It is through constant repetition that they learn how kick the ball accurately and with the correct weight of pass.

### Passing the ball



### How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs for this activity.

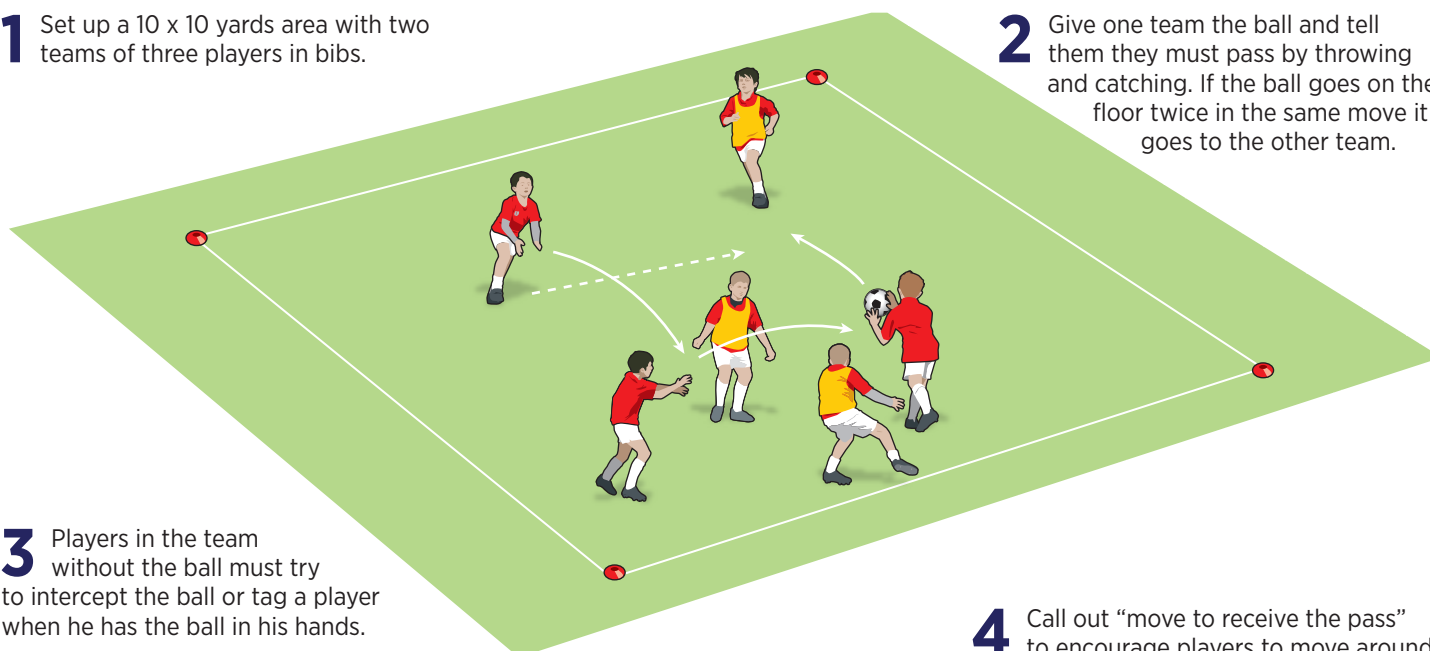
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	—————>
	Run with the ball	Shot
	----->	—————>

## Pass accurately to a team mate (2 yards)

**GAME: BASKETBALL POSSESSION**

**CALL OUT** "Look to where the pass is going" • "Use the inside of the foot"

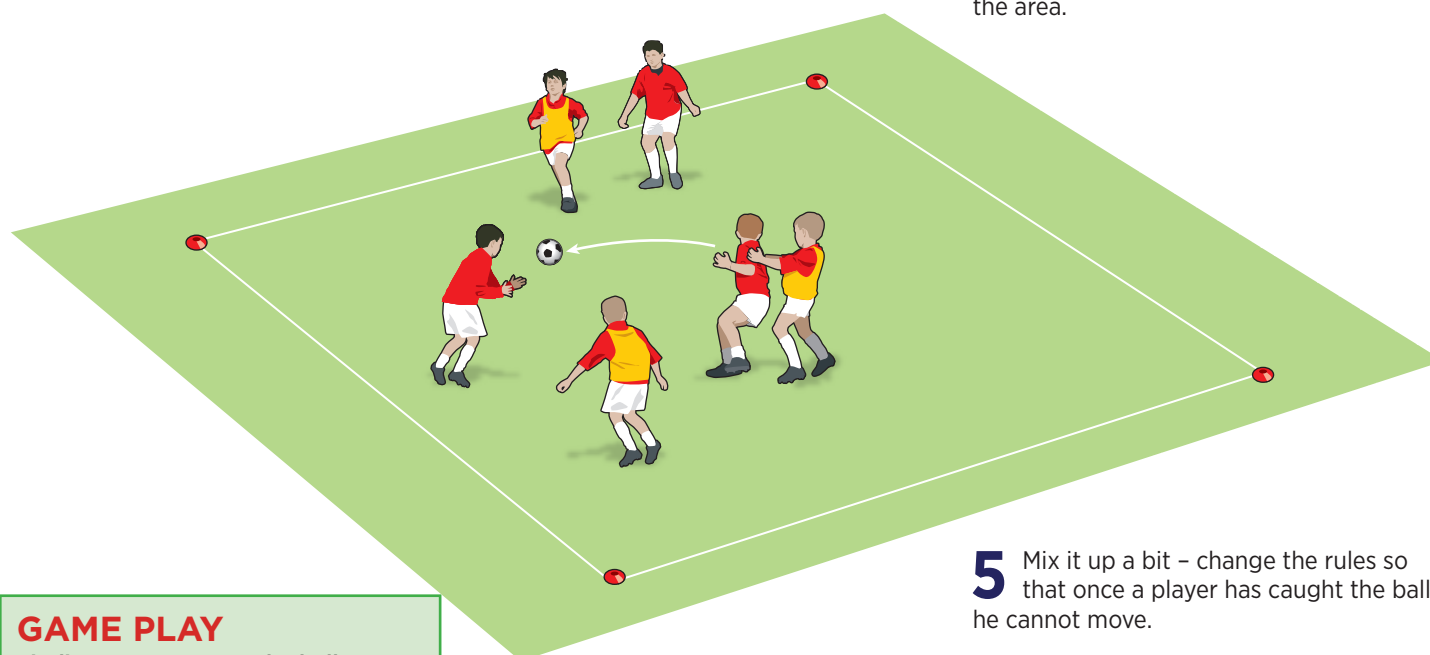
**1** Set up a 10 x 10 yards area with two teams of three players in bibs.



**2** Give one team the ball and tell them they must pass by throwing and catching. If the ball goes on the floor twice in the same move it goes to the other team.

**3** Players in the team without the ball must try to intercept the ball or tag a player when he has the ball in his hands.

**4** Call out "move to receive the pass" to encourage players to move around the area.



**5** Mix it up a bit - change the rules so that once a player has caught the ball he cannot move.

### GAME PLAY

Finding space to pass the ball.  
Understand who is on their team to pass to.  
Good team building exercise.

### How many players do I need?

This works best in groups of three or four players.

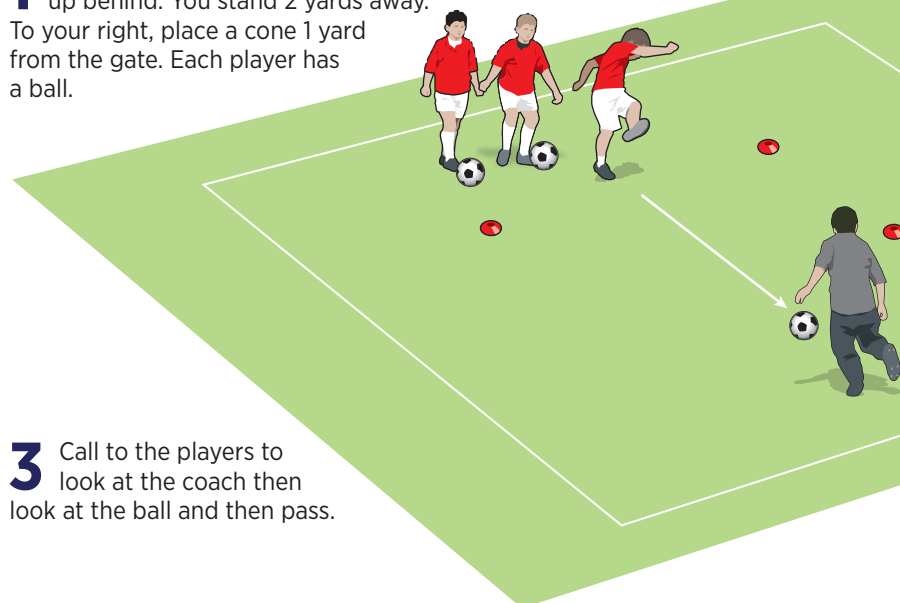
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

# Make a 2 yard pass and follow the ball

## ACTIVITY: PASS AND GET THE BALL

**CALL OUT** "Look where the pass is going" • "Use the inside of the foot" • "Run after the pass"

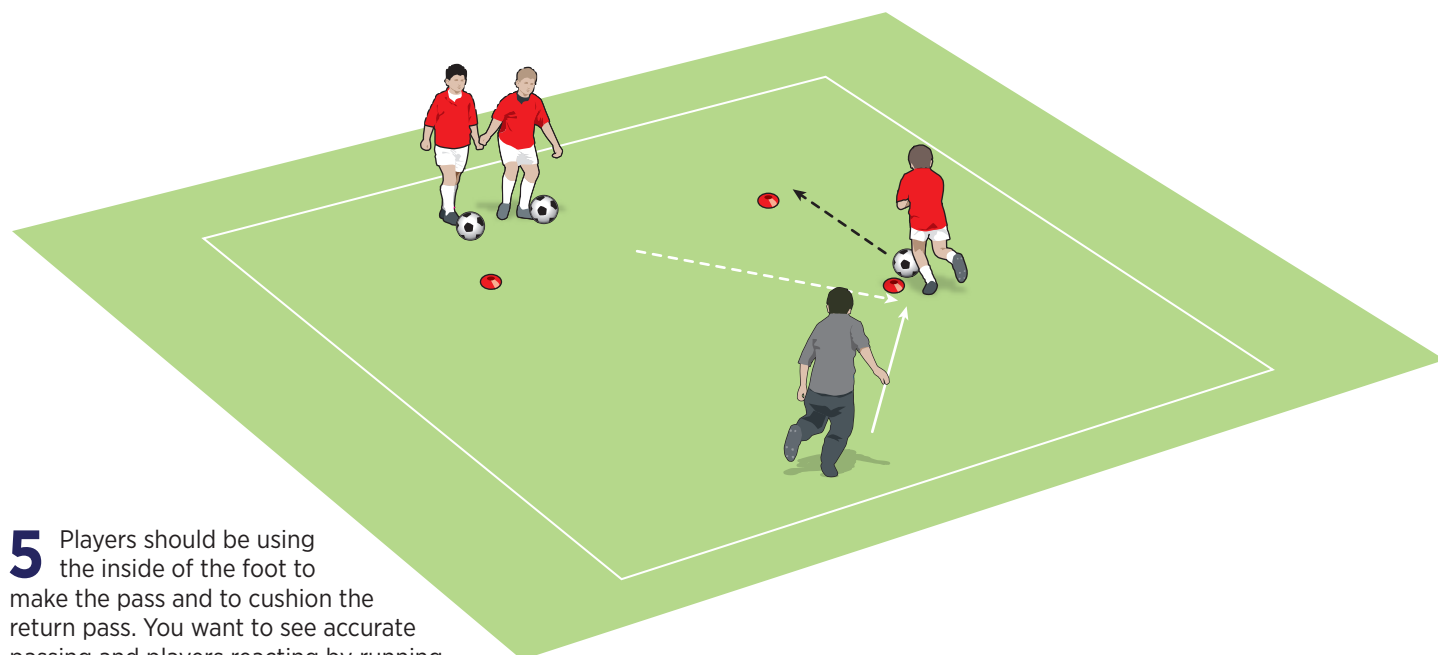
**1** Set up a gate with three players lined up behind. You stand 2 yards away. To your right, place a cone 1 yard from the gate. Each player has a ball.



**2** The first player passes to you then runs diagonally to the cone to receive a simple pass back from you. He should turn and dribble back to the gate.

**3** Call to the players to look at the coach then look at the ball and then pass.

**4** As soon as the player passes encourage him to run to the cone "run after the pass".



**5** Players should be using the inside of the foot to make the pass and to cushion the return pass. You want to see accurate passing and players reacting by running to the cone.

### How many players do I need?

This activity works best in groups of three players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	—>

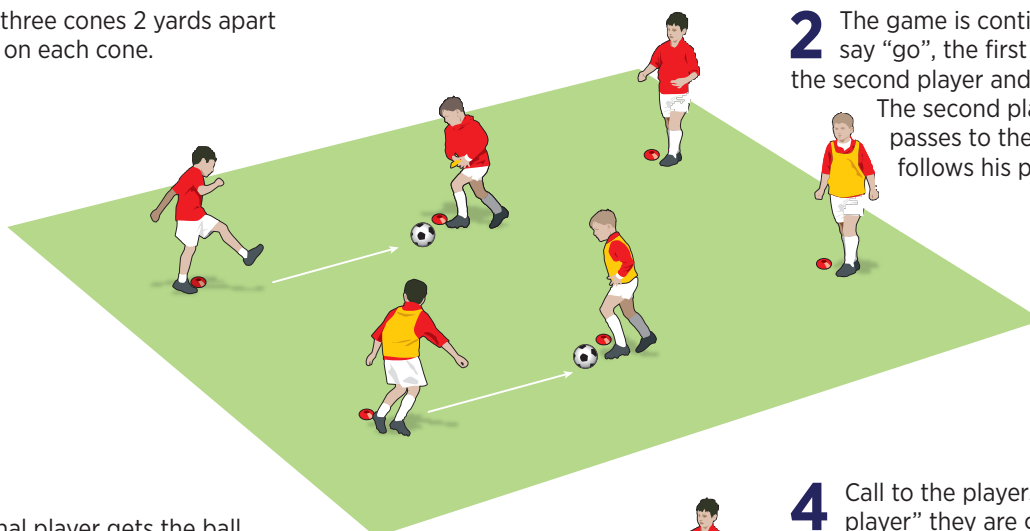
U7 | ATTACKING 4

# Make a 2 yard pass and follow the ball

**GAME: PASS AND RUN**

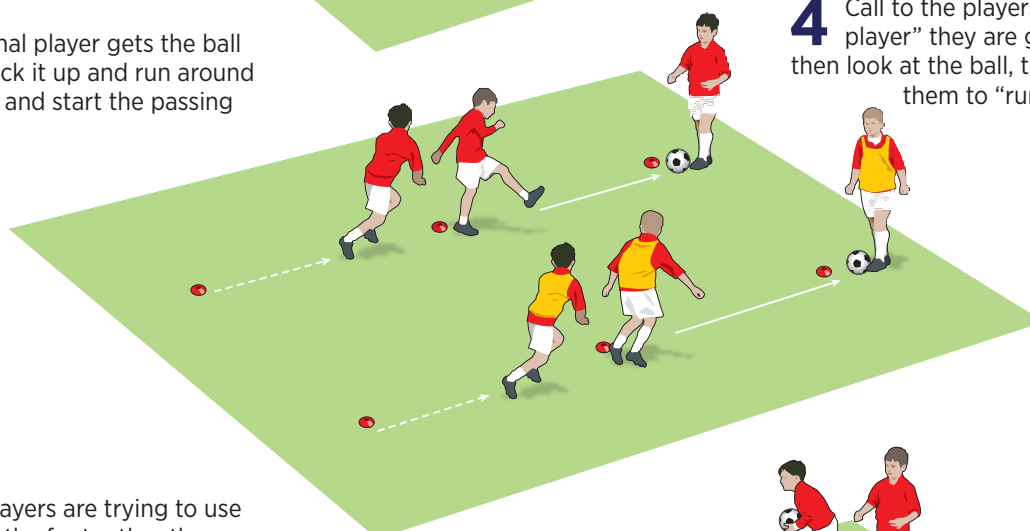
**CALL OUT** "Look where the pass is going" • "Use the inside of the foot" • "Run after the pass"

**1** Place sets of three cones 2 yards apart with a player on each cone.



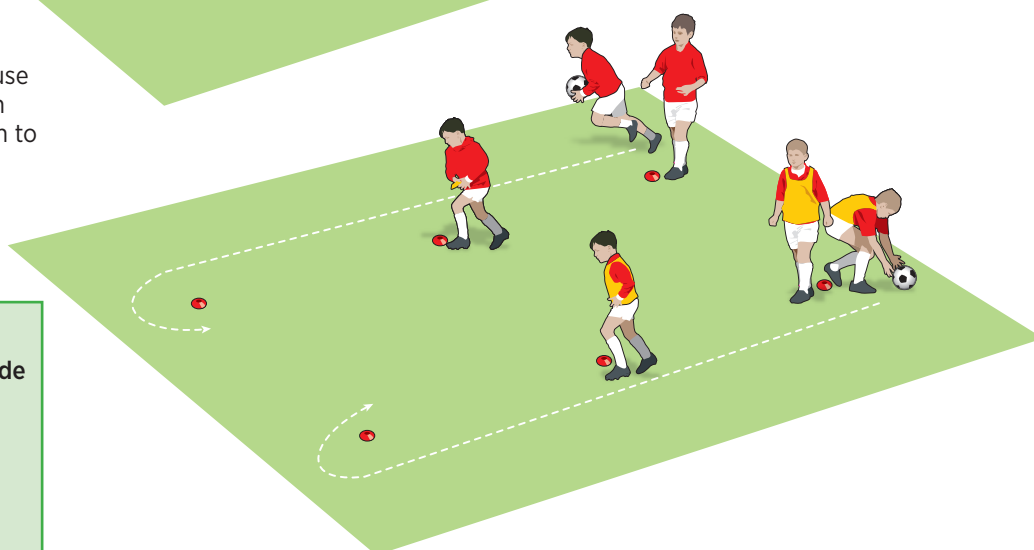
**2** The game is continuous. When you say "go", the first player passes to the second player and runs after his pass. The second player then turns, passes to the third player and follows his pass.

**3** When the final player gets the ball he should pick it up and run around to the beginning and start the passing over again.



**4** Call to the players to "look at the player" they are going to pass to, then look at the ball, then pass. Call for them to "run after the pass".

**5** Make sure players are trying to use the inside of the foot rather than whack it with their toes. Call for them to "use the inside of the foot".



## GAME PLAY

Concentrate on players using the side of the foot.

Work on accuracy before speed.

Picking up the ball and getting quickly to the beginning is vital.

## How many players do I need?

This game works best in groups of three players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

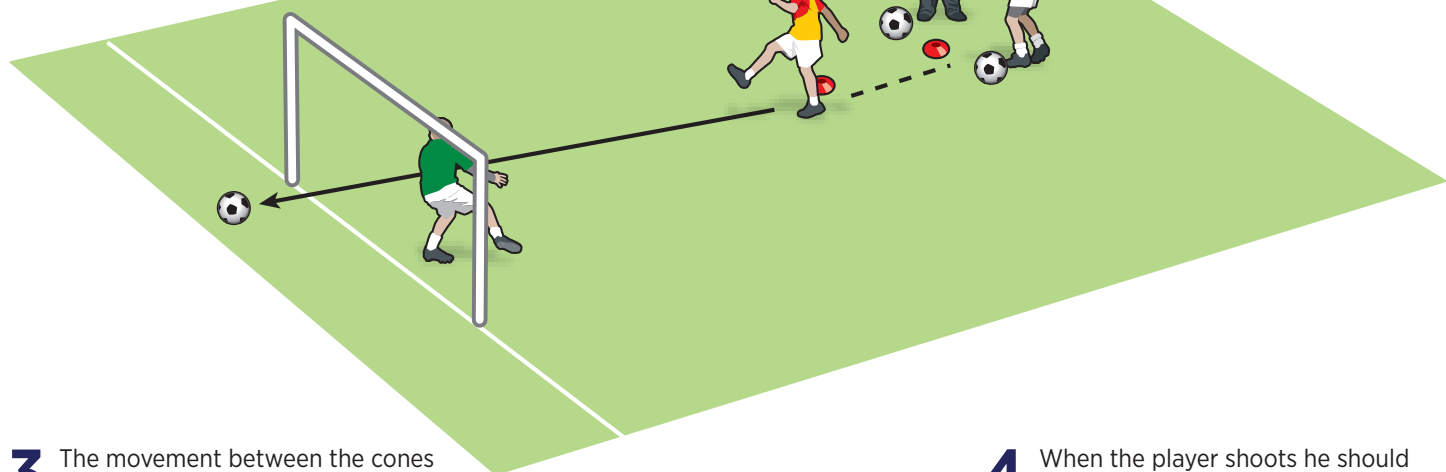
# Score a goal

**ACTIVITY: AVOID THE KEEPER**

**CALL OUT** "Shoot into the goal" • "Kick to the side of the goalkeeper"

**1** Set up the activity with one goal, a cone 5 yards away and another cone 1 yard further back. Put three players, each with a ball, behind the second cone and a goalkeeper in the goal.

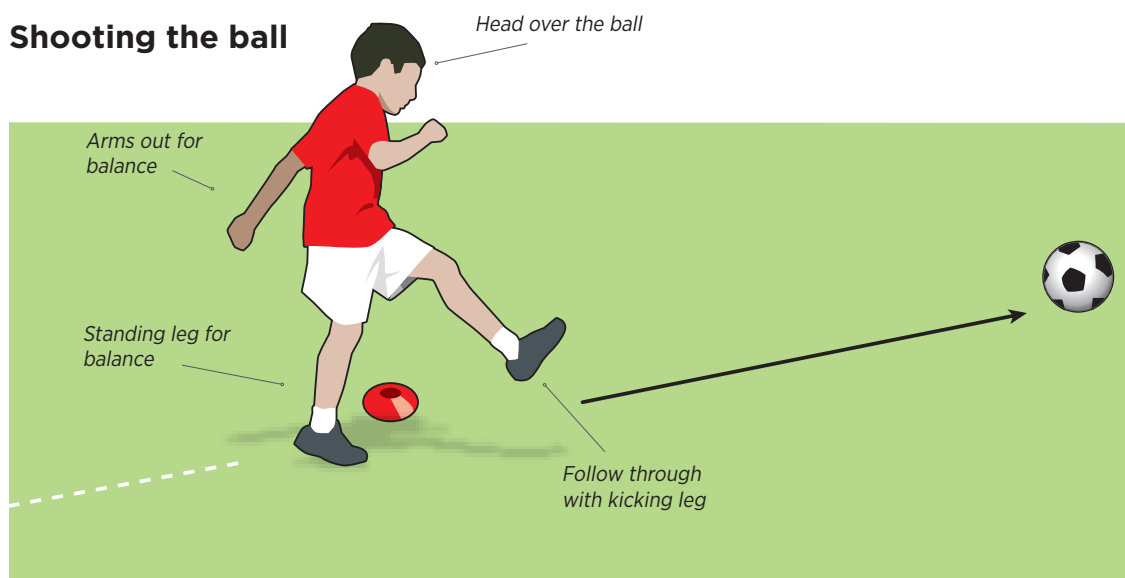
**2** When you say "go", the player runs with the ball from the second cone to the first cone and shoots at the goal.



**3** The movement between the cones allows players to take a pace or two with the ball before shooting, as the ball should always be moving unless you are practicing penalties.

**4** When the player shoots he should follow through with his kick so the ball is propelled to the goal - tell players they should "kick to the side of the goalkeeper".

## Shooting the ball



### How many players do I need?

Players work in threes with a goalkeeper.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	—>

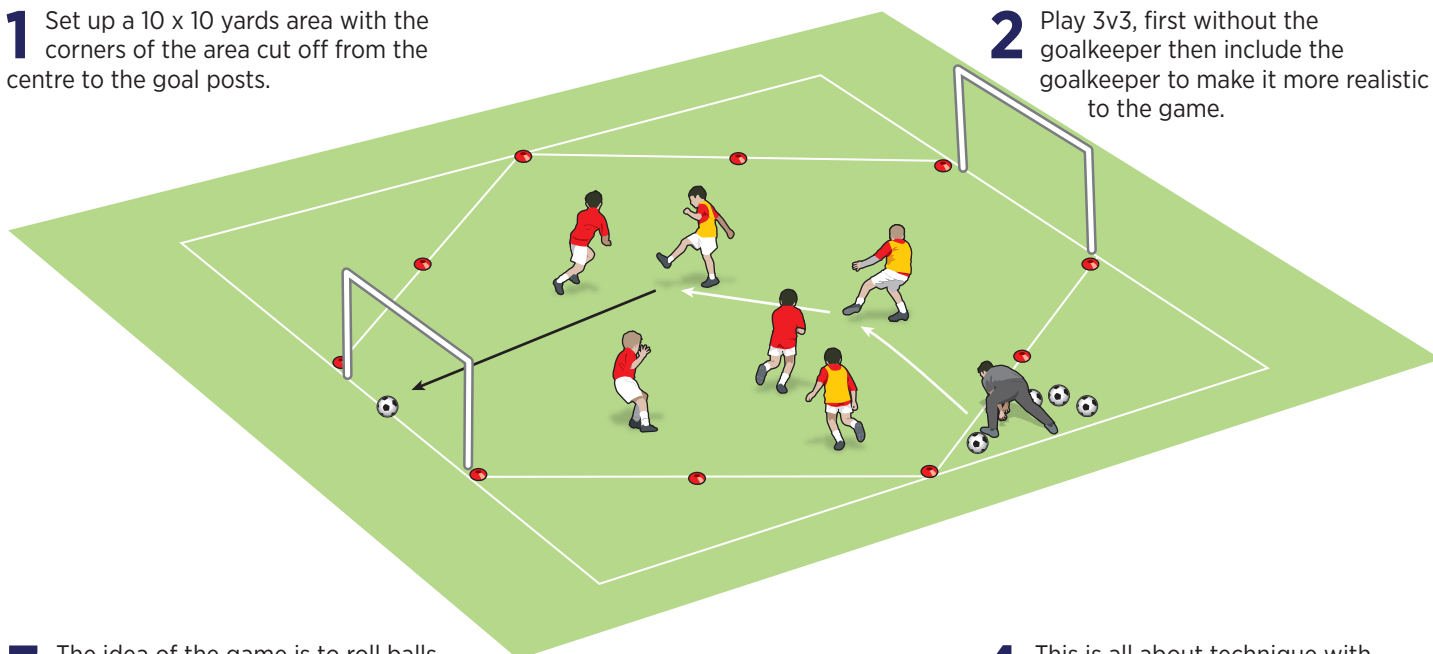
U7 | ATTACKING 5

# Score a goal

**GAME: SHOOTING ARCADE**

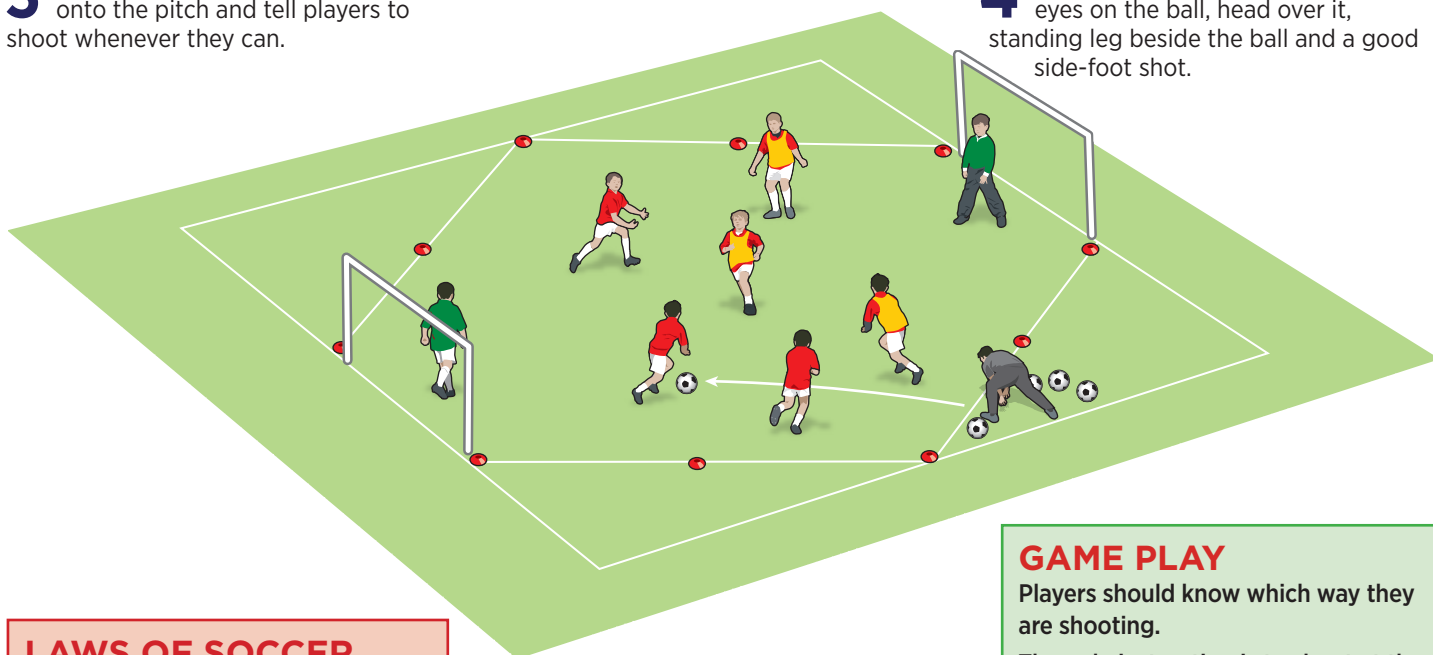
**CALL OUT** "Shoot into the goal" • "Kick to the side of the goalkeeper"

**1** Set up a 10 x 10 yards area with the corners of the area cut off from the centre to the goal posts.



**2** Play 3v3, first without the goalkeeper then include the goalkeeper to make it more realistic to the game.

**3** The idea of the game is to roll balls onto the pitch and tell players to shoot whenever they can.



**4** This is all about technique with eyes on the ball, head over it, standing leg beside the ball and a good side-foot shot.

## LAWS OF SOCCER

In any game...

The ball must be fully across the goal line to count as a goal.

## GAME PLAY

Players should know which way they are shooting.

The only instruction is to shoot at the goal.

Praise shooting whether the ball goes in the goal or not.

## How many players do I need?

This game uses six players, in a 3v3, plus two goalkeepers.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	--->	—>





# EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

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## U7

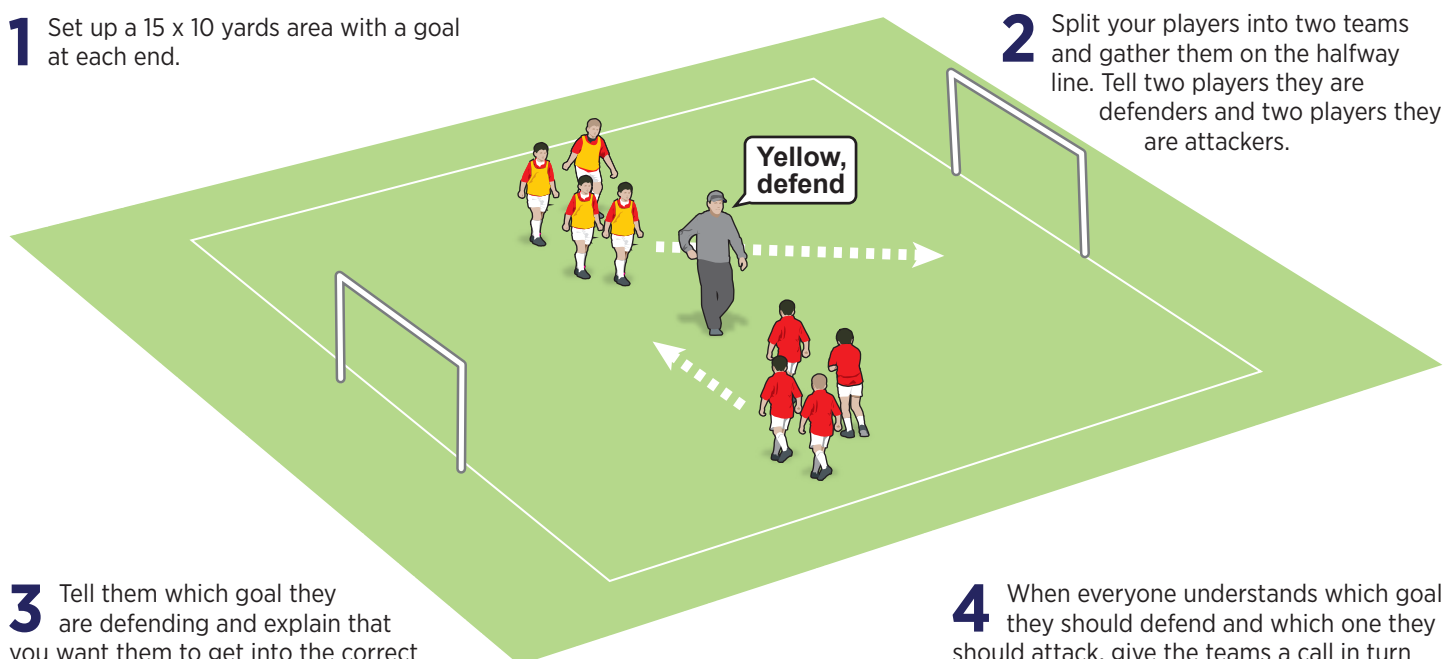
### DEFENDING

# Know that you must retreat when your side loses the ball

## ACTIVITY: RECOVER POSITION WALKTHROUGH

**CALL OUT** "Get between the ball and your own goal"

**1** Set up a 15 x 10 yards area with a goal at each end.



**2** Split your players into two teams and gather them on the halfway line. Tell two players they are defenders and two players they are attackers.

**3** Tell them which goal they are defending and explain that you want them to get into the correct positions on your call.

**4** When everyone understands which goal they should defend and which one they should attack, give the teams a call in turn "Yellow, defend" or "Red, attack". On your call, the team should run and get into the correct position.



**5** When the players move into position they should try to keep their formation (i.e. defenders and attackers) but that is secondary to making sure that they are in the right part of the pitch, facing in the right direction.

**6** Use this activity for just a few minutes at the start of each training session so you are not wasting time during the session constantly telling the players which way they are kicking the ball.

### How many players do I need?

You can work with any number of players you have in your squad. We used eight players.

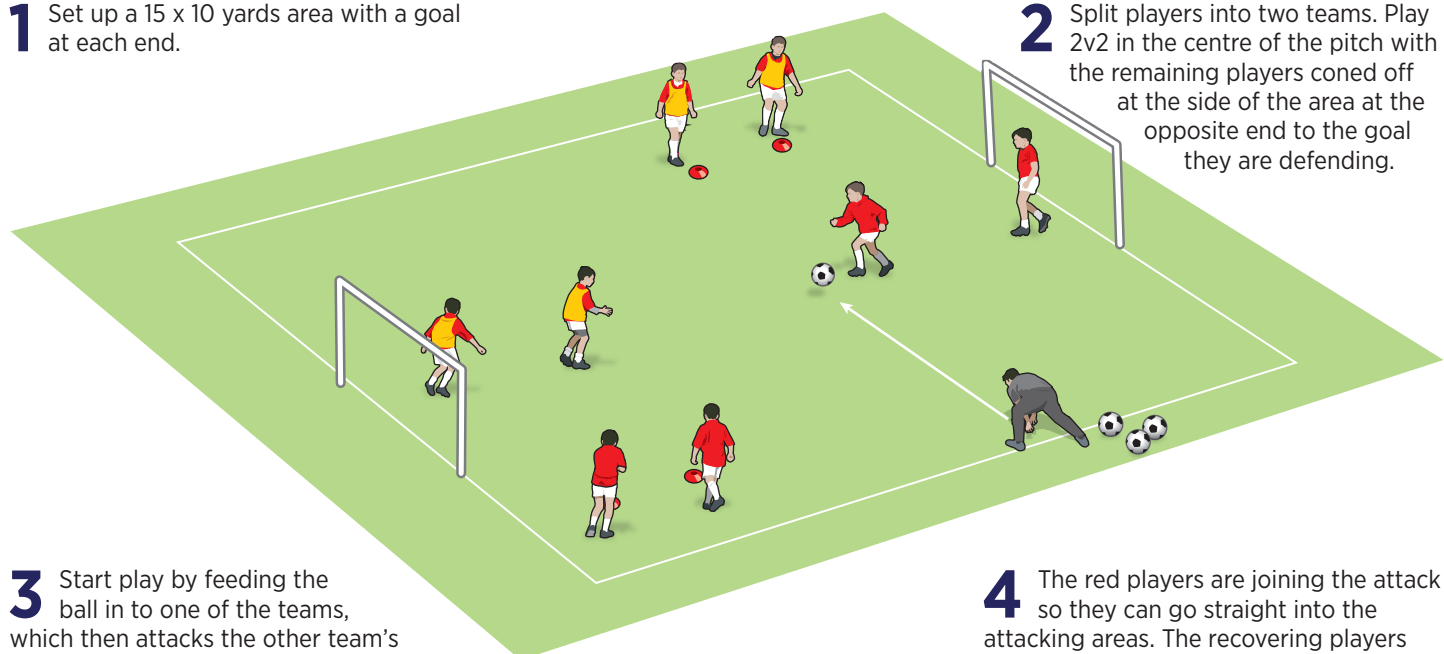
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

# Know that you must retreat when your side loses the ball

**GAME: CALL FOR THE CAVALRY**

**CALL OUT** "Get between the ball and your own goal"

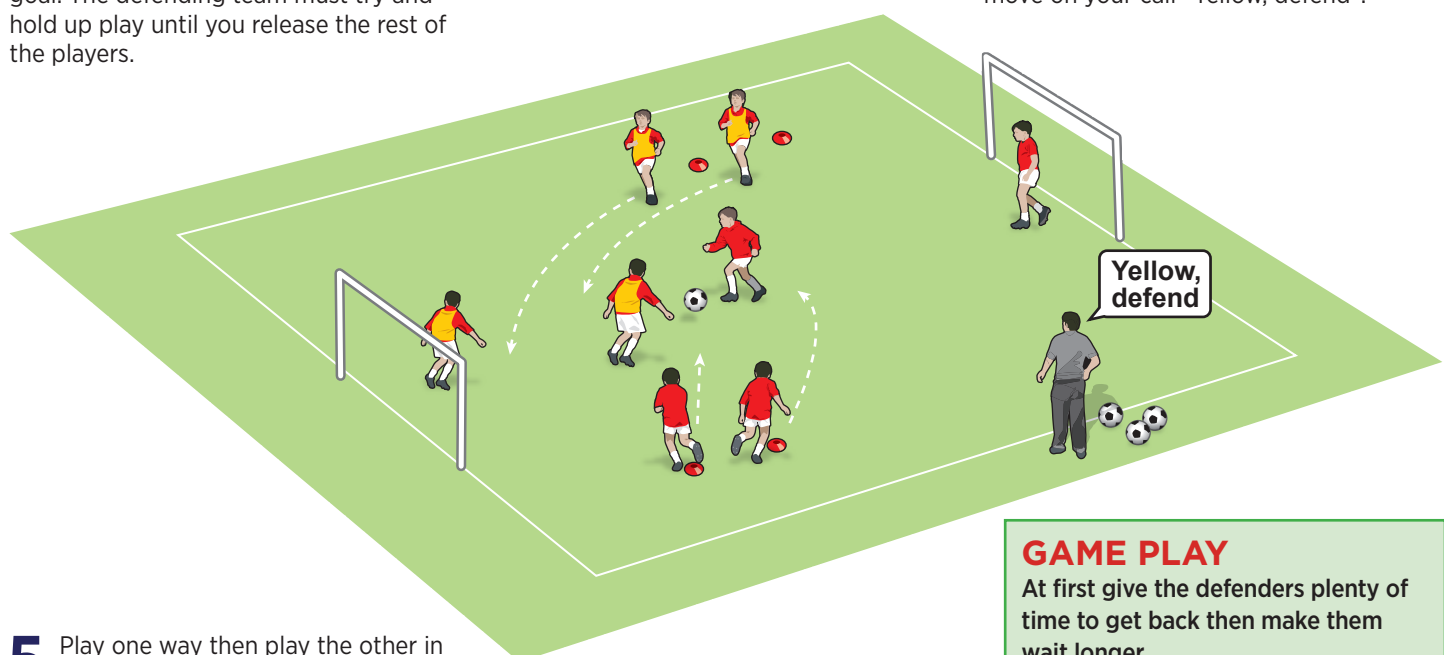
**1** Set up a 15 x 10 yards area with a goal at each end.



**2** Split players into two teams. Play 2v2 in the centre of the pitch with the remaining players coned off at the side of the area at the opposite end to the goal they are defending.

**3** Start play by feeding the ball in to one of the teams, which then attacks the other team's goal. The defending team must try and hold up play until you release the rest of the players.

**4** The red players are joining the attack so they can go straight into the attacking areas. The recovering players move on your call "Yellow, defend".



**5** Play one way then play the other in a wave motion.

**GAME PLAY**  
At first give the defenders plenty of time to get back then make them wait longer.  
Look first for players to get into position between the ball and goal then look for good blocks.

## How many players do I need?

This works best with four players on each side plus goalkeepers.

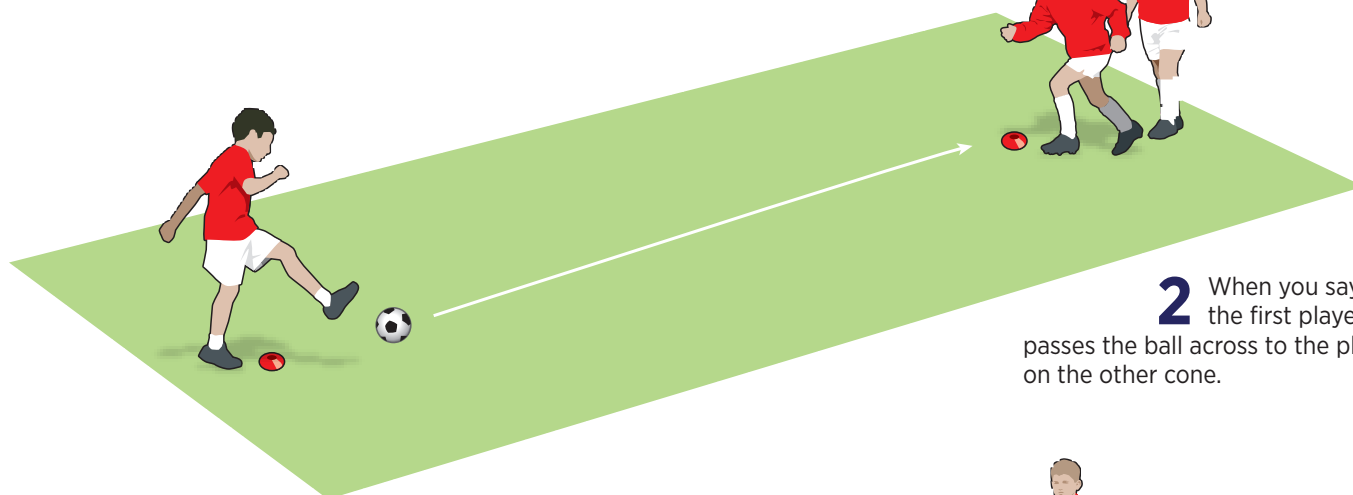
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

## Pressing the player with the ball

**ACTIVITY: PASS AND PRESS**

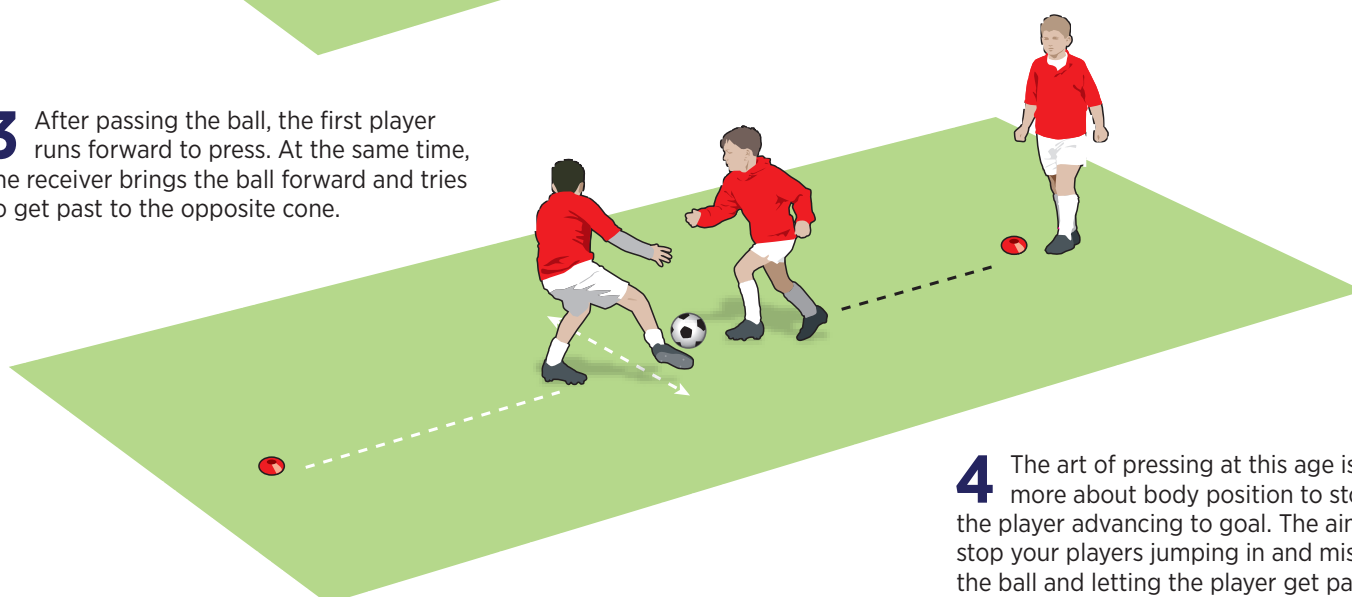
**CALL OUT** "Run towards the player with the ball" • "Try to block the route to goal"

**1** Place two cones 3 yards apart. Put one player on the first cone, with a ball, and one or two players on the second cone.



**2** When you say "go", the first player passes the ball across to the player on the other cone.

**3** After passing the ball, the first player runs forward to press. At the same time, the receiver brings the ball forward and tries to get past to the opposite cone.



**4** The art of pressing at this age is more about body position to stop the player advancing to goal. The aim is to stop your players jumping in and missing the ball and letting the player get past. They should use their bodies to sit off the player and try to force a mistake.

**5** Once the ball has been lost or the dribbling player has managed to get to the other side then play starts again from the same end.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in twos or threes – you can decide based on the number of players in your squad and the space available.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	--->
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	--->

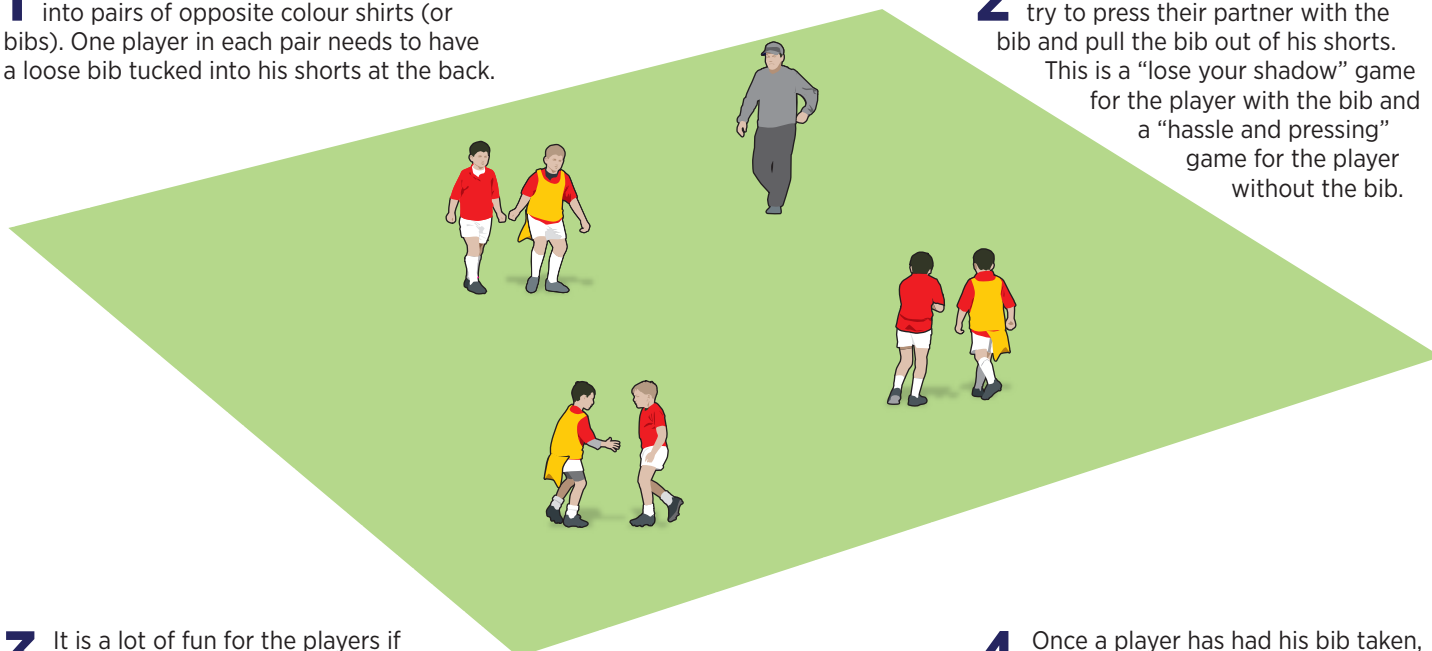
U7 | DEFENDING 2

## Pressing the player with the ball

**GAME: CATCH THE BIB**

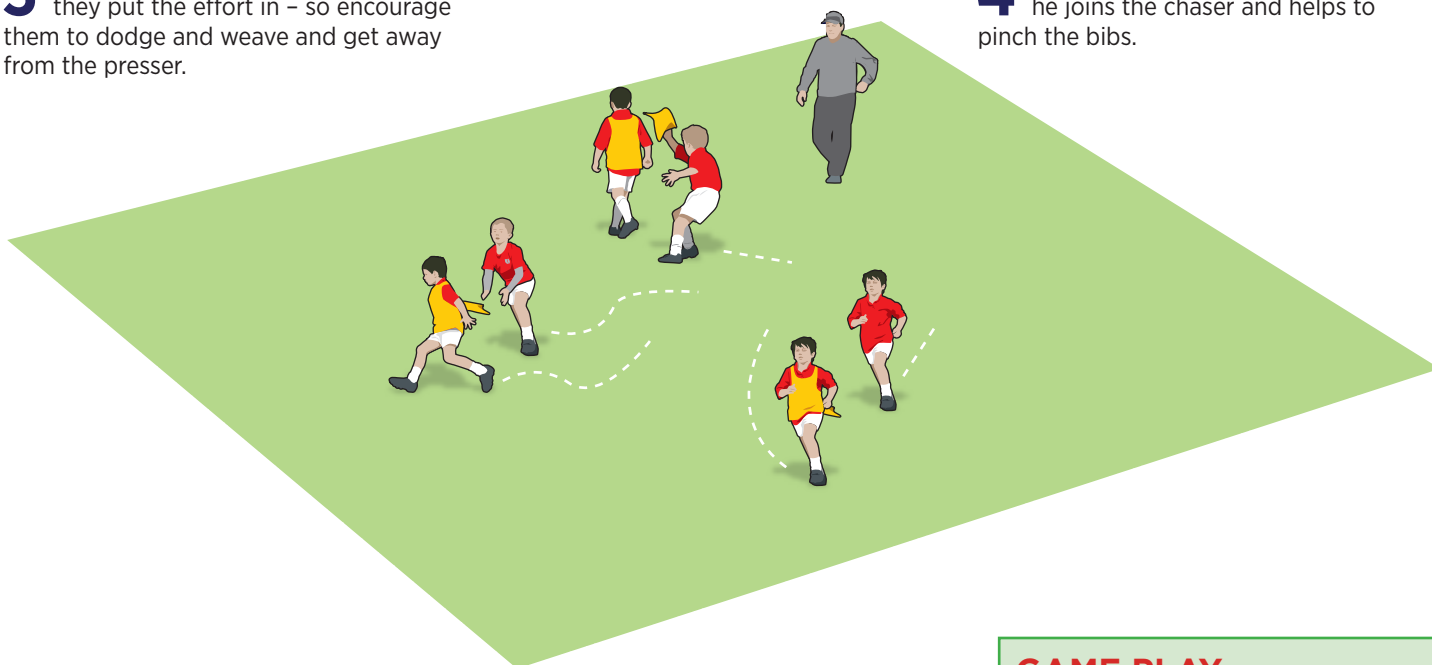
**CALL OUT** "Don't let the player with the bib get away" • "Try to get the bib"

**1** In a 10 x 10 yards square area, put players into pairs of opposite colour shirts (or bibs). One player in each pair needs to have a loose bib tucked into his shorts at the back.



**2** When you say "go", players must try to press their partner with the bib and pull the bib out of his shorts. This is a "lose your shadow" game for the player with the bib and a "hassle and pressing" game for the player without the bib.

**3** It is a lot of fun for the players if they put the effort in - so encourage them to dodge and weave and get away from the presser.



**4** Once a player has had his bib taken, he joins the chaser and helps to pinch the bibs.

### GAME PLAY

Agility, balance and coordination are key.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

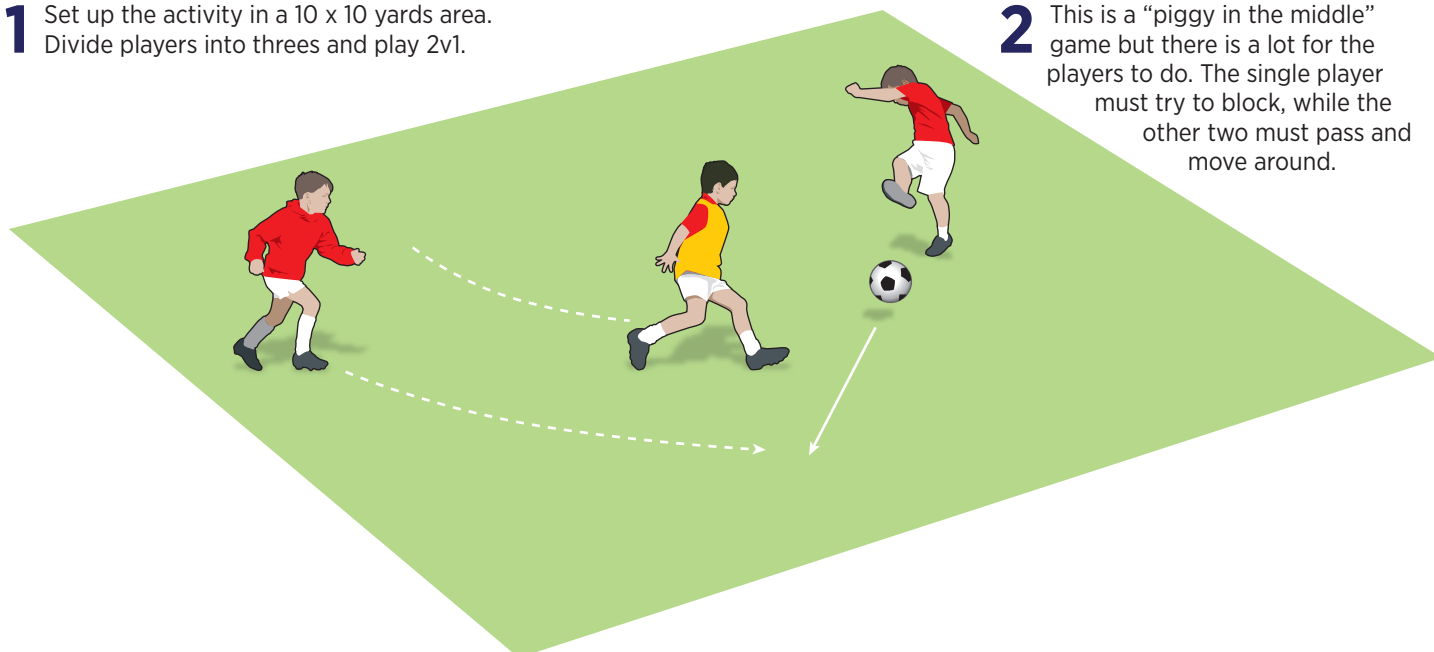
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

## Block passes by the other side

### ACTIVITY: PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE

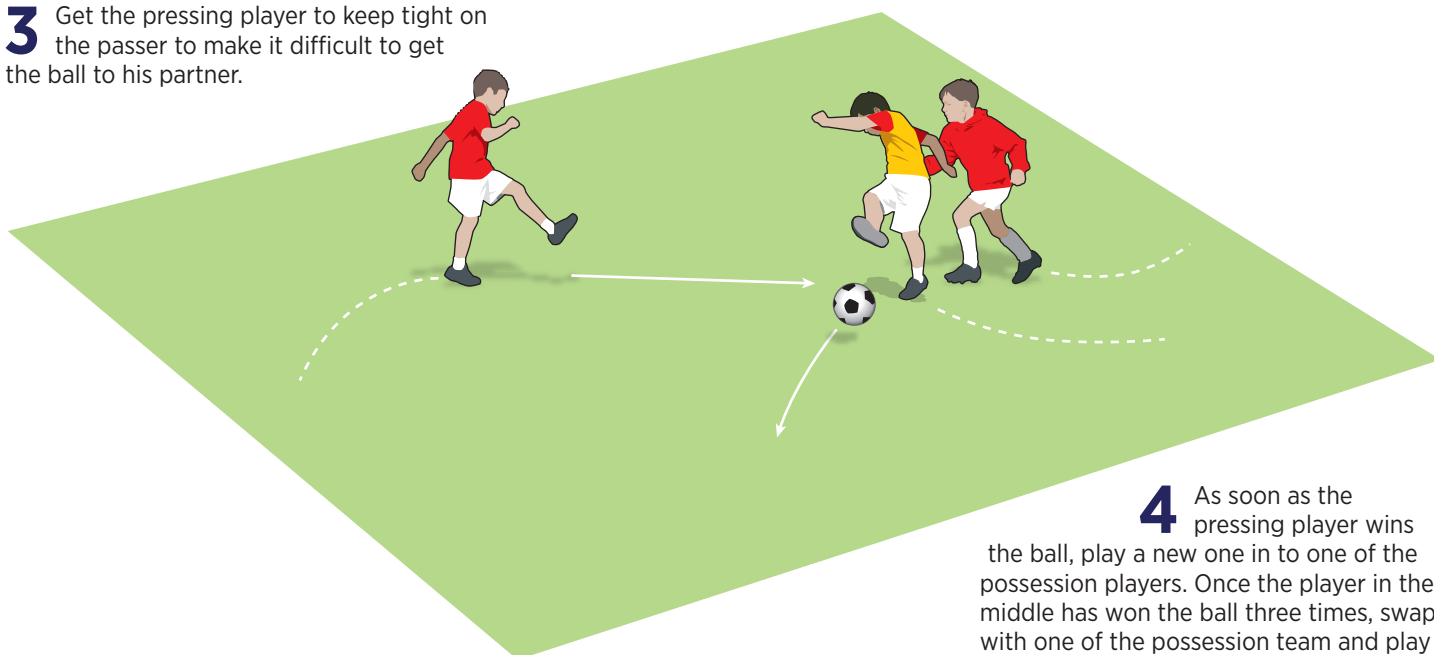
**CALL OUT** "Get in the way of the ball" • "Get to the ball before the other player"

**1** Set up the activity in a 10 x 10 yards area. Divide players into threes and play 2v1.



**2** This is a "piggy in the middle" game but there is a lot for the players to do. The single player must try to block, while the other two must pass and move around.

**3** Get the pressing player to keep tight on the passer to make it difficult to get the ball to his partner.



**4** As soon as the pressing player wins the ball, play a new one in to one of the possession players. Once the player in the middle has won the ball three times, swap with one of the possession team and play another three goes.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in threes.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

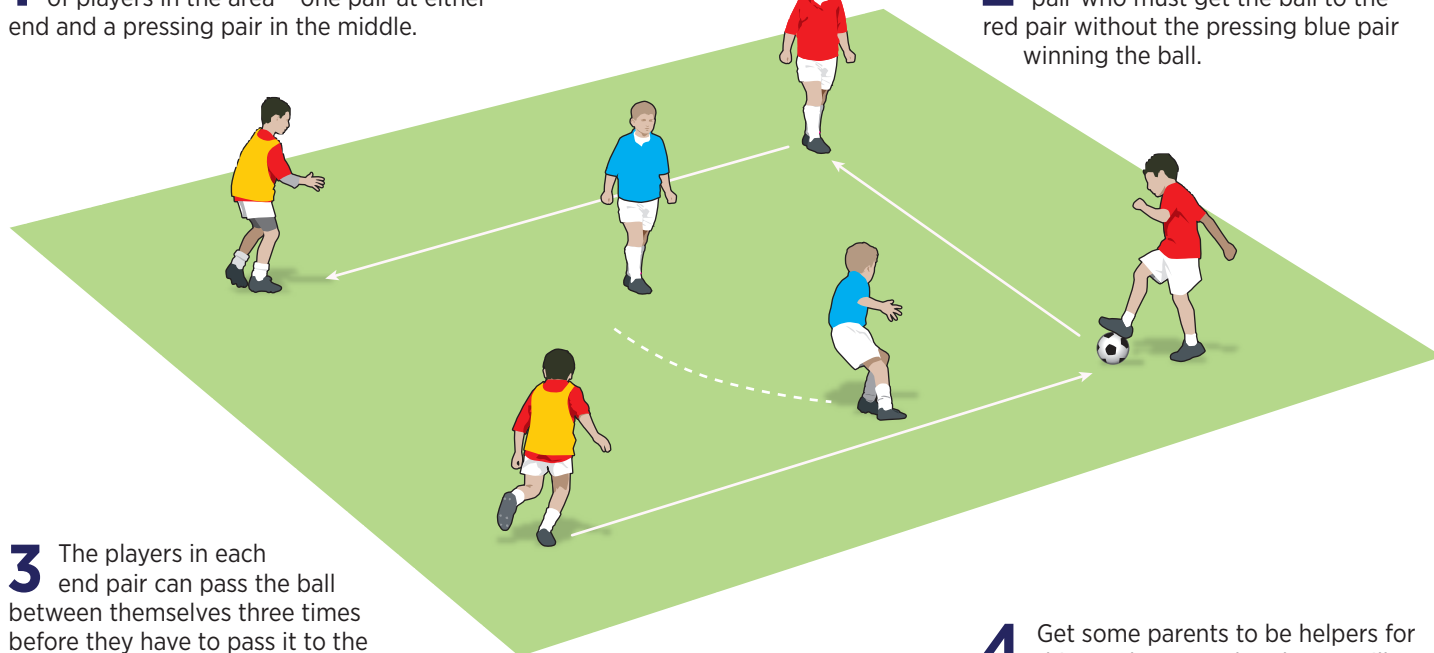
U7 | DEFENDING 3

## Block passes by the other side

GAME: BLOCK THE PASS

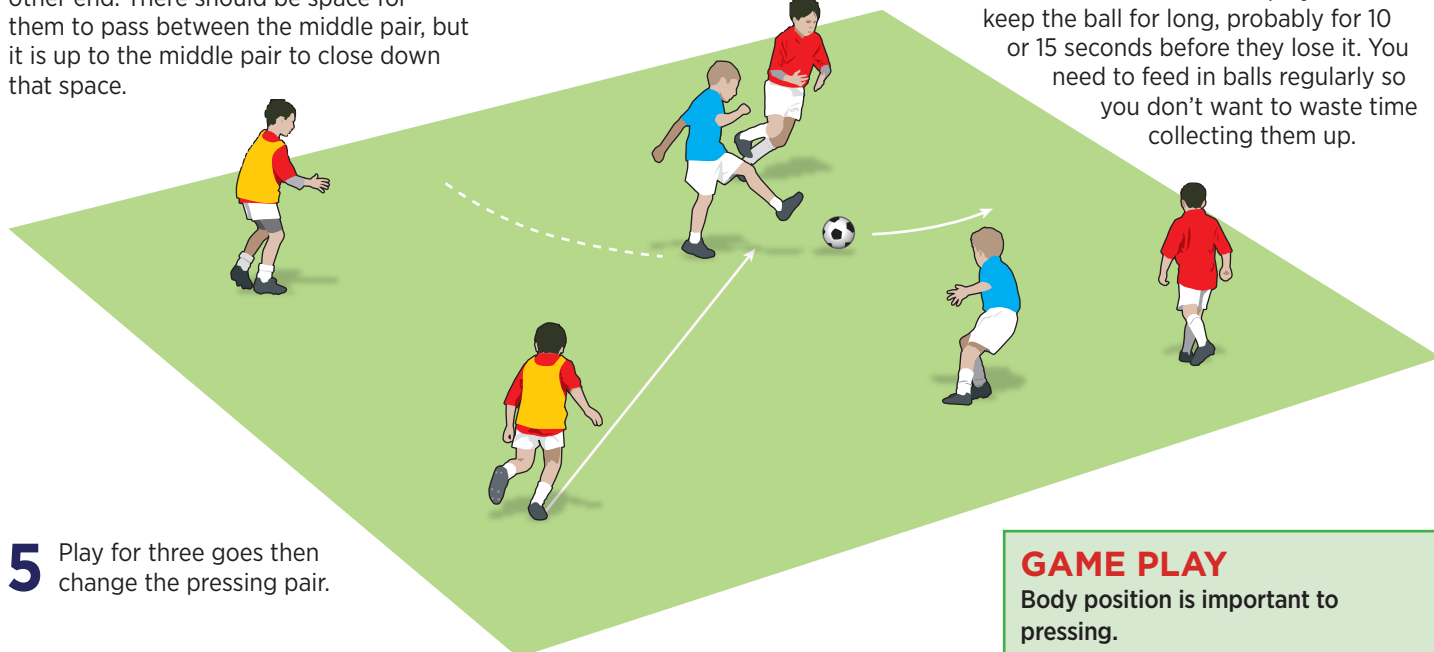
**CALL OUT** "Get in the way of the ball" • "Get to the ball before the other player"

**1** Set up a 15 x 15 yards area. Put three pairs of players in the area – one pair at either end and a pressing pair in the middle.



**2** Here the game starts with the yellow pair who must get the ball to the red pair without the pressing blue pair winning the ball.

**3** The players in each end pair can pass the ball between themselves three times before they have to pass it to the other end. There should be space for them to pass between the middle pair, but it is up to the middle pair to close down that space.



**4** Get some parents to be helpers for this one because the players will not keep the ball for long, probably for 10 or 15 seconds before they lose it. You need to feed in balls regularly so you don't want to waste time collecting them up.

**5** Play for three goes then change the pressing pair.

### GAME PLAY

Body position is important to pressing.

Movement to close up spaces.

Try to 'see' the pass.

### How many players do I need?

Use six players for this game in three groups of two players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot





# **EasiCoach**

**SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES**

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## **U7-U8**

### **RESTARTS**

# Kick-off

## ACTIVITY: THE LAW

### CALL OUT

“Pass the ball forward to a team mate” • “Now dribble the ball” • “Support the player with the ball”

**1** Mark out a circle measuring 10 yards across and place a cone in the centre. The centre cone represents the centre spot on the pitch.

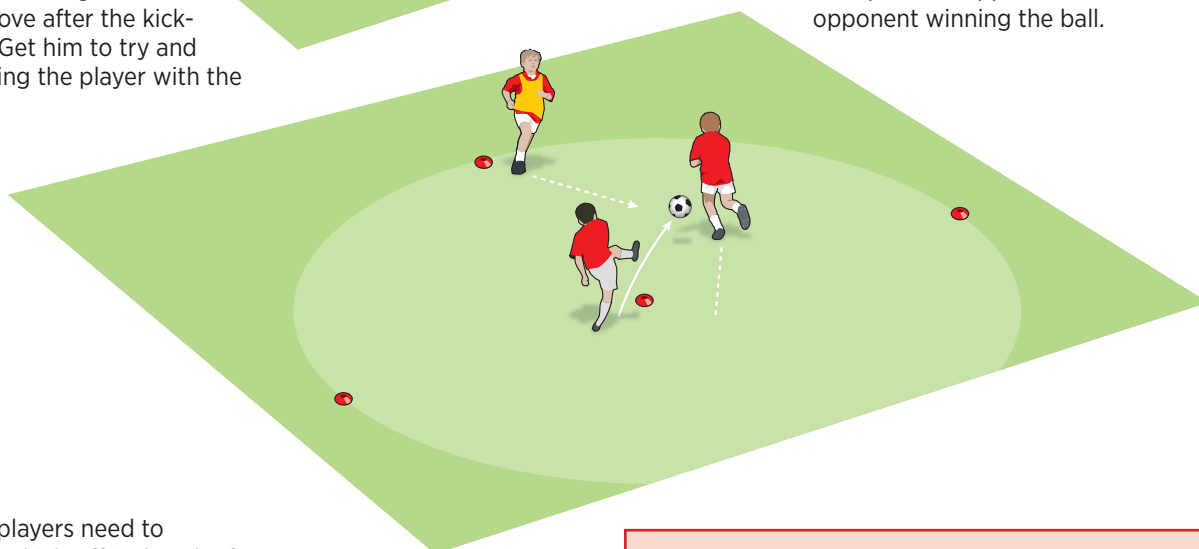


**2** Have two players take the kick-off from the centre cone – one passing forward into the opposition half and the other receiving and running forwards with the ball.



**3** Have one opposition player stand 5 yards away from the kick-off on the edge of the circle. He can move after the kick-off has been taken. Get him to try and block any runs, forcing the player with the ball to pass.

**4** The move finishes with either a pass back to the first player, a dribble past the opponent or the opponent winning the ball.



**5** The only thing players need to remember at the kick-off is that the first movement of the ball must be forward.

### LAWS OF SOCCER

#### Start and restart of play

Procedure: A kick-off is taken at the centre of the playing area to start the game and after a goal has been scored.

Opponents must be 5 yards away from the ball and in their own half of the field. The ball must be played forward. In Mini Soccer a goal cannot be scored directly from a start or restart of play.

### How many players do I need?

Work with players in threes with different players taking the kick-off.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

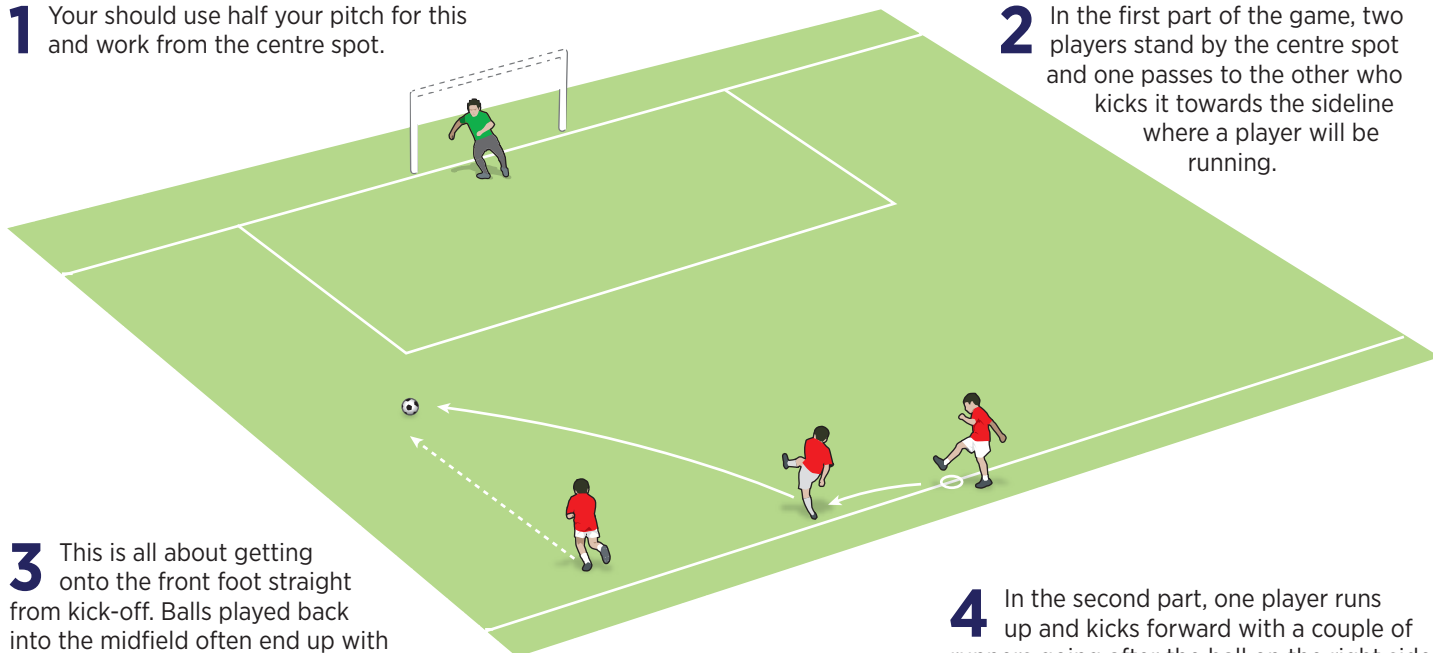
U7-U8 | RESTARTS 1

# Kick-off

**GAME: FORWARD MARCH!**

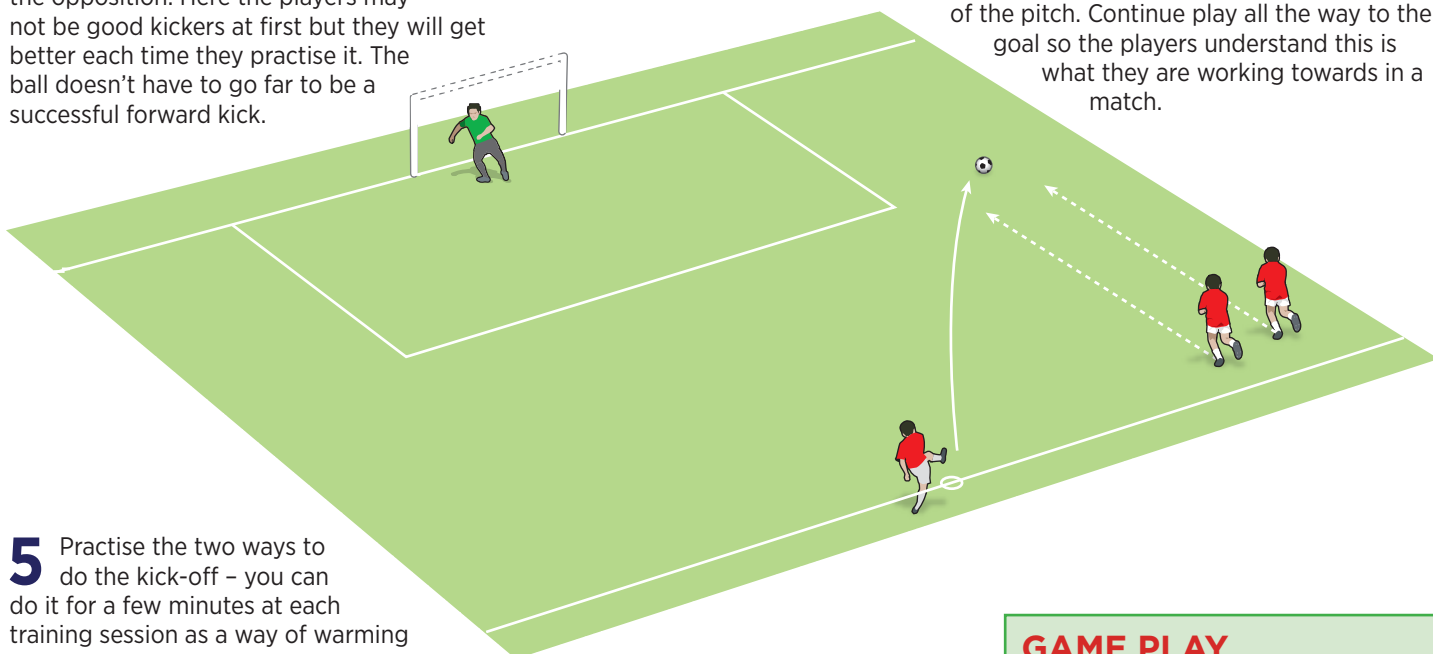
**CALL OUT** "Pass the ball forward to a team mate" • "Now dribble the ball" • "Support the player with the ball"

**1** You should use half your pitch for this and work from the centre spot.



**2** In the first part of the game, two players stand by the centre spot and one passes to the other who kicks it towards the sideline where a player will be running.

**3** This is all about getting onto the front foot straight from kick-off. Balls played back into the midfield often end up with the opposition. Here the players may not be good kickers at first but they will get better each time they practise it. The ball doesn't have to go far to be a successful forward kick.



**4** In the second part, one player runs up and kicks forward with a couple of runners going after the ball on the right side of the pitch. Continue play all the way to the goal so the players understand this is what they are working towards in a match.

**5** Practise the two ways to do the kick-off - you can do it for a few minutes at each training session as a way of warming the players up.

**GAME PLAY**  
Timing is key to the kick-offs.  
Be positive.  
Praise players for good attempts.

## How many players do I need?

This is a three man kick-off but you can add defenders if you have odd numbers of players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

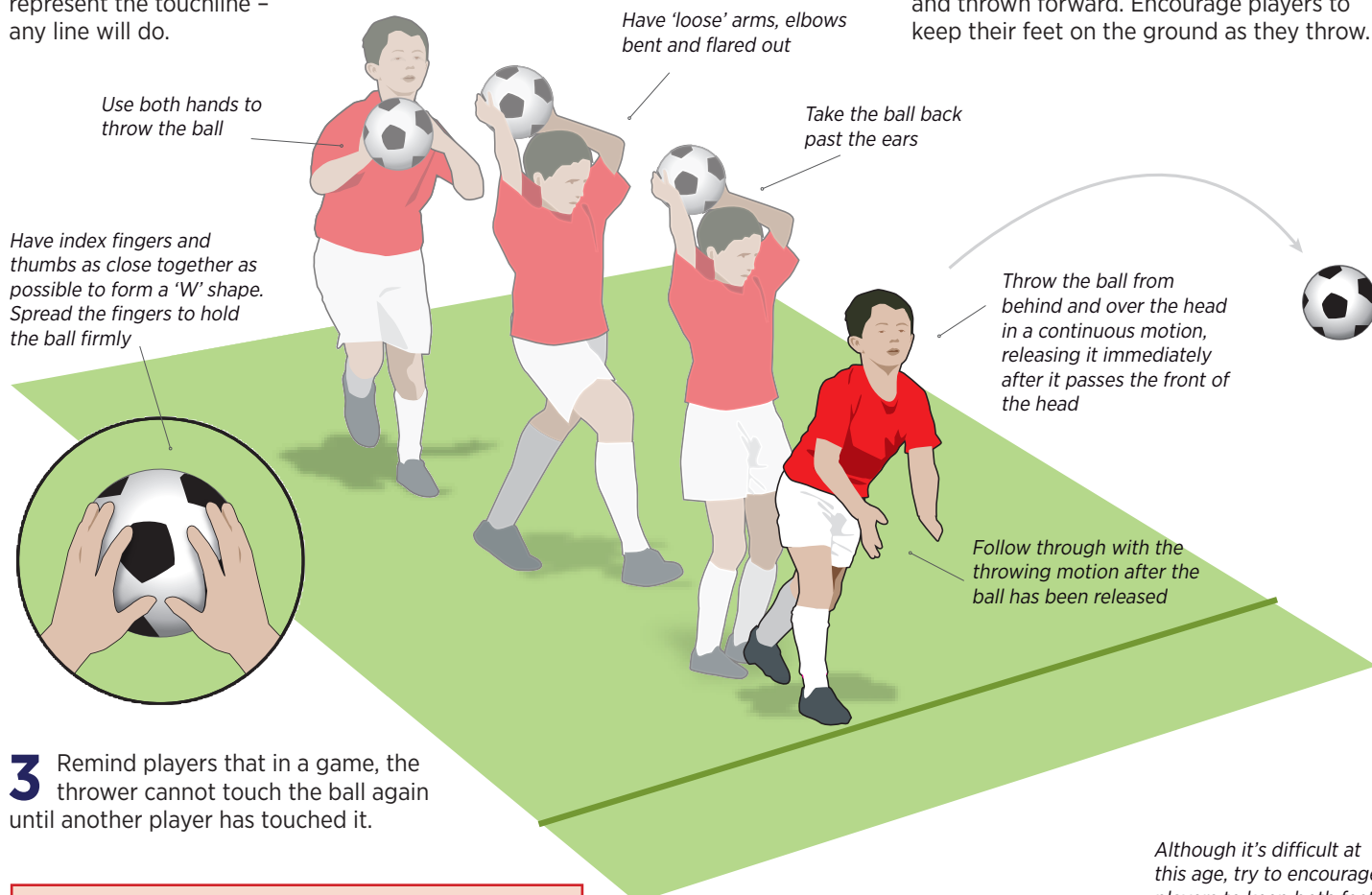
# Throw-in

## ACTIVITY: THE LAW

**CALL OUT** "Ball behind your head" • "Feet on the ground"

**1** Line your players up on what would represent the touchline – any line will do.

**2** Get each player to practise throw-ins. You want to see the ball behind the head and thrown forward. Encourage players to keep their feet on the ground as they throw.



**3** Remind players that in a game, the thrower cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.

### LAWS OF SOCCER

#### Throw-ins

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

Faces the field of play.

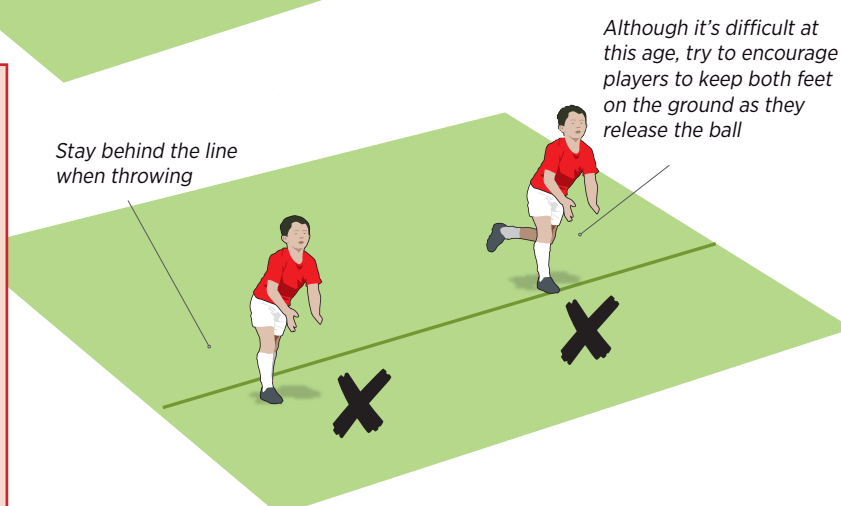
Has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line.

Uses both hands.

Delivers the ball from behind and over their head.

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

In some leagues, U7 and U8 children are permitted to roll the ball underarm with one or both hands into the field of play – please take local advice.



### How many players do I need?

Players work individually.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

Run with the ball      Shot

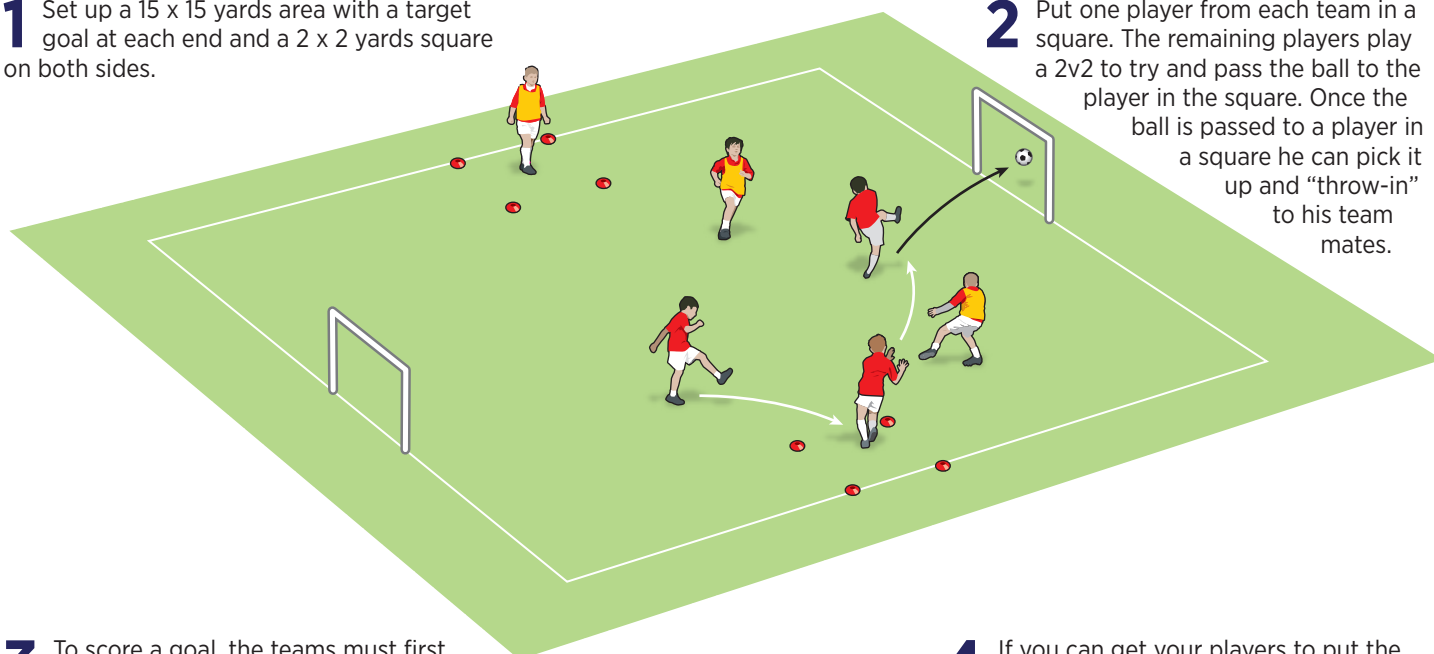
U7-U8 | RESTARTS 2

# Throw-in

**GAME: SCORE FROM THROW-INS**

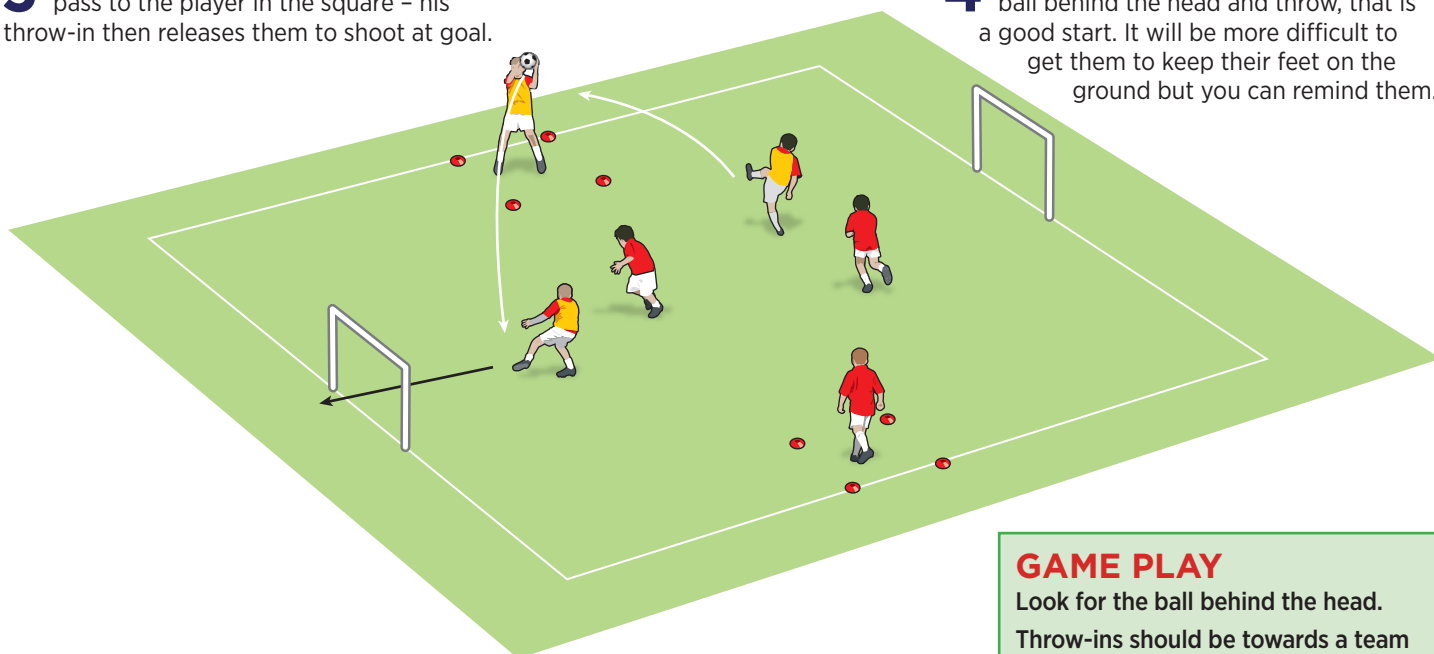
**CALL OUT** "Ball behind your head" • "Feet on the ground"

**1** Set up a 15 x 15 yards area with a target goal at each end and a 2 x 2 yards square on both sides.



**2** Put one player from each team in a square. The remaining players play a 2v2 to try and pass the ball to the player in the square. Once the ball is passed to a player in a square he can pick it up and "throw-in" to his team mates.

**3** To score a goal, the teams must first pass to the player in the square - his throw-in then releases them to shoot at goal.



**4** If you can get your players to put the ball behind the head and throw, that is a good start. It will be more difficult to get them to keep their feet on the ground but you can remind them.

**GAME PLAY**  
Look for the ball behind the head.  
Throw-ins should be towards a team mate.  
Remind players that their feet should be on the ground.

**How many players do I need?**

You need six players in a 3v3.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U7-U8 | RESTARTS 3

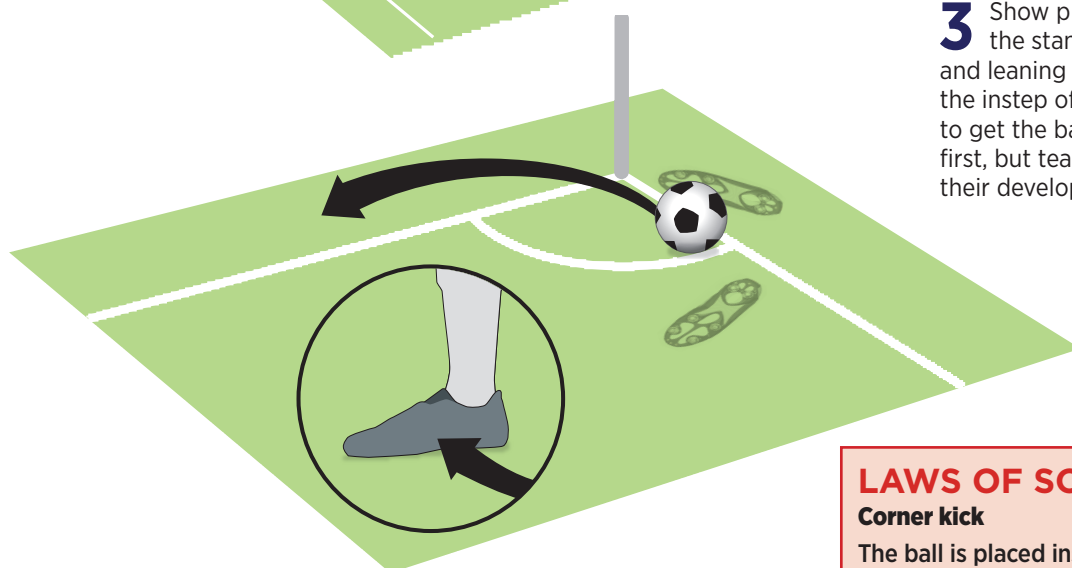
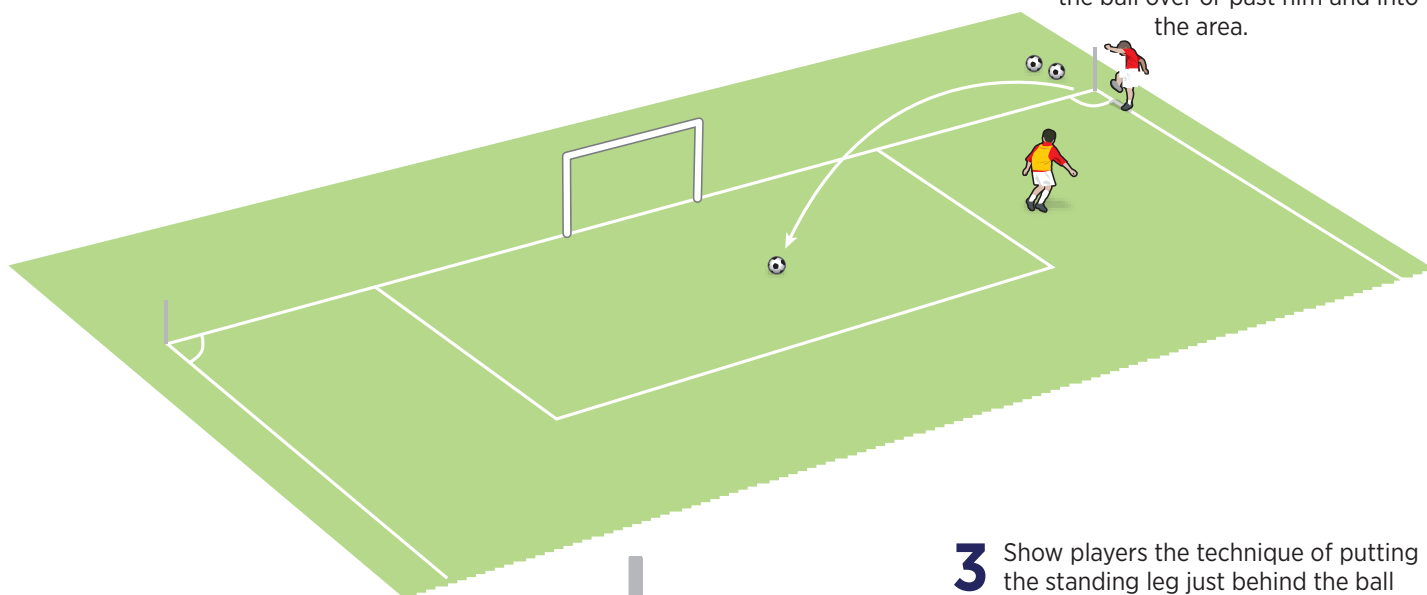
# Corner kick

ACTIVITY: THE LAW

**CALL OUT** "Place the ball near the corner" • "Kick towards the penalty area"

**1** Use one end of your usual pitch. This activity is purely to practise kicking the ball from the corner into the penalty area.

**2** Get your players to take turns crossing the ball in from the corner. Put an opposing player 5 yards from the corner so that the kicker has to think about getting the ball over or past him and into the area.



**3** Show players the technique of putting the standing leg just behind the ball and leaning back slightly as they kick with the instep of the foot. They may not be able to get the ball very high off the ground at first, but teaching the technique is vital to their development.

**4** Get all your players to practise taking corner kicks. Get them to try from either side of the goal.

## LAWS OF SOCCER

### Corner kick

The ball is placed inside the corner arc – or touching one of the lines – at the corner nearest to where the ball went out.

The corner flag post cannot be moved.

Opponents must be 5 yards from the corner flag until the ball is in play.

The ball is kicked by a player of the attacking team.

## How many players do I need?

Get all your players to have a go.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	→
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	→

U7-U8 | RESTARTS 3

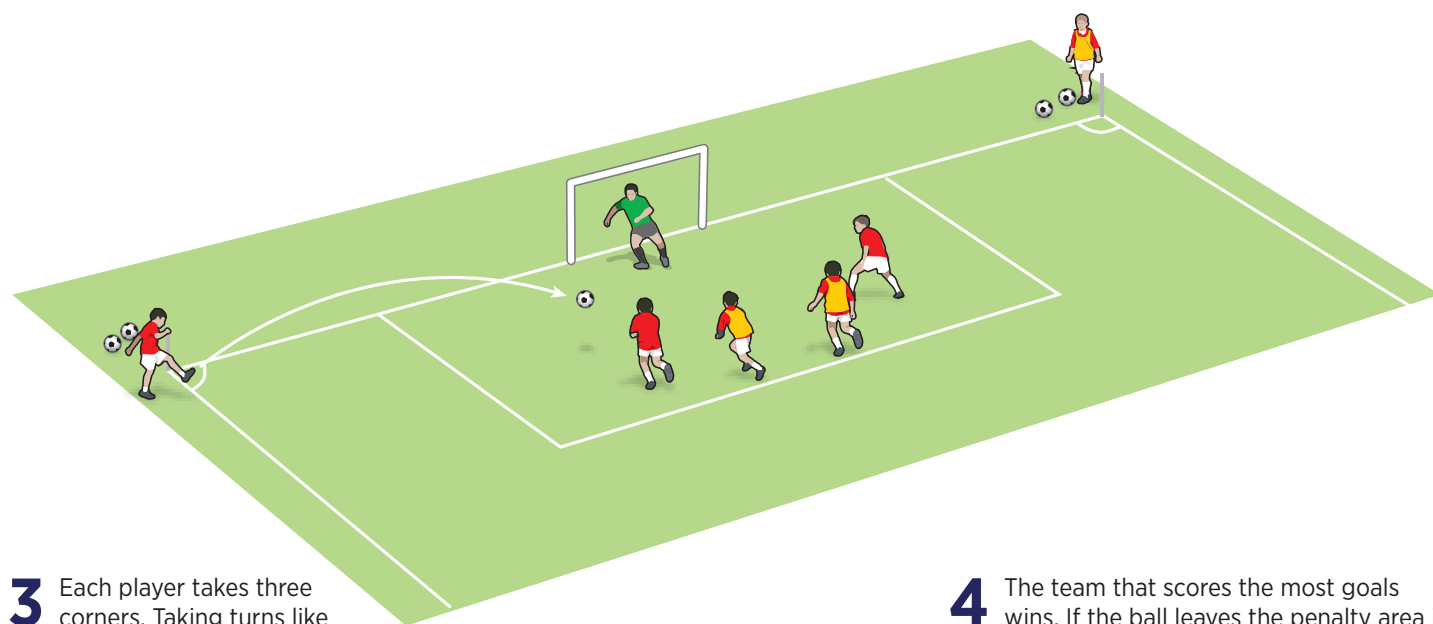
# Corner kick

**GAME: CORNER KICK BATTLE**

**CALL OUT** "Place the ball near the corner" • "Kick towards the penalty area"

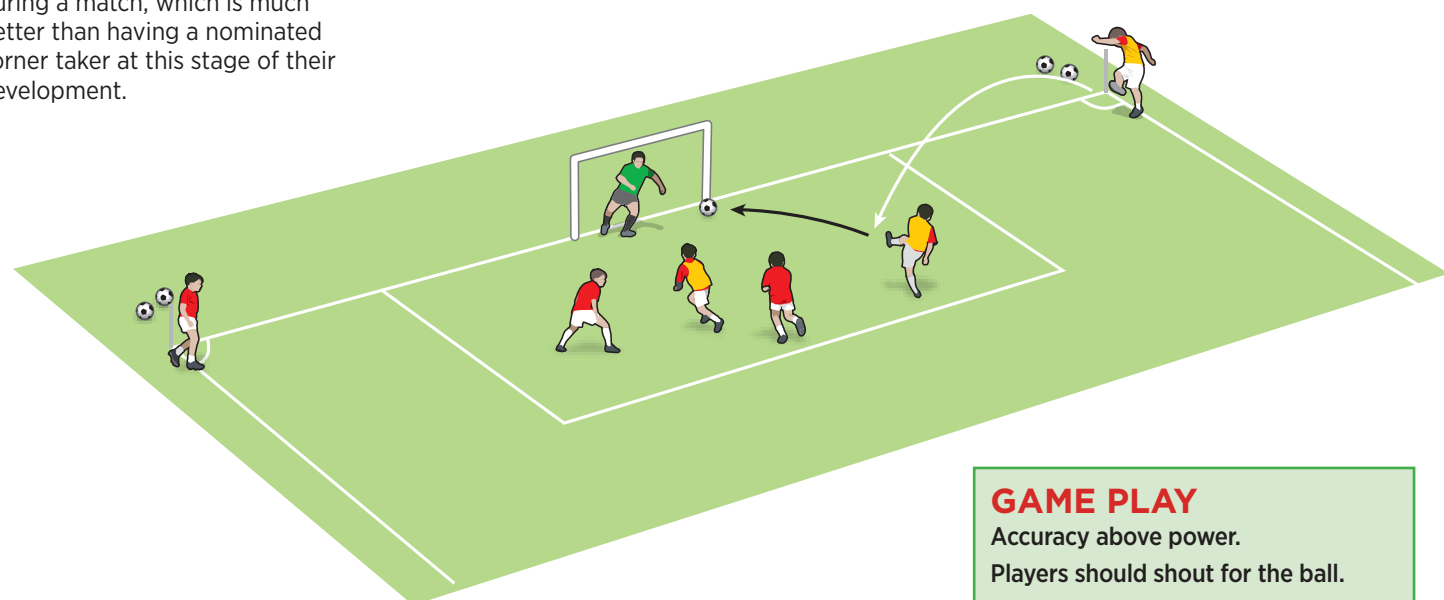
**1** Use one end of your usual pitch. Put a player from each team on the two corners and put the other players in the penalty area in a 2v2.

**2** The teams take turns to take three corners each. The players in the penalty area attack their own corner and defend their opponents' corner.



**3** Each player takes three corners. Taking turns like this means that any of your players will be able to take corners during a match, which is much better than having a nominated corner taker at this stage of their development.

**4** The team that scores the most goals wins. If the ball leaves the penalty area it is dead and the other team takes their turn.



**GAME PLAY**  
Accuracy above power.  
Players should shout for the ball.  
Movement to the ball.

## How many players do I need?

I used seven players with two teams of three players and a goalkeeper. Players take turns to take corners.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

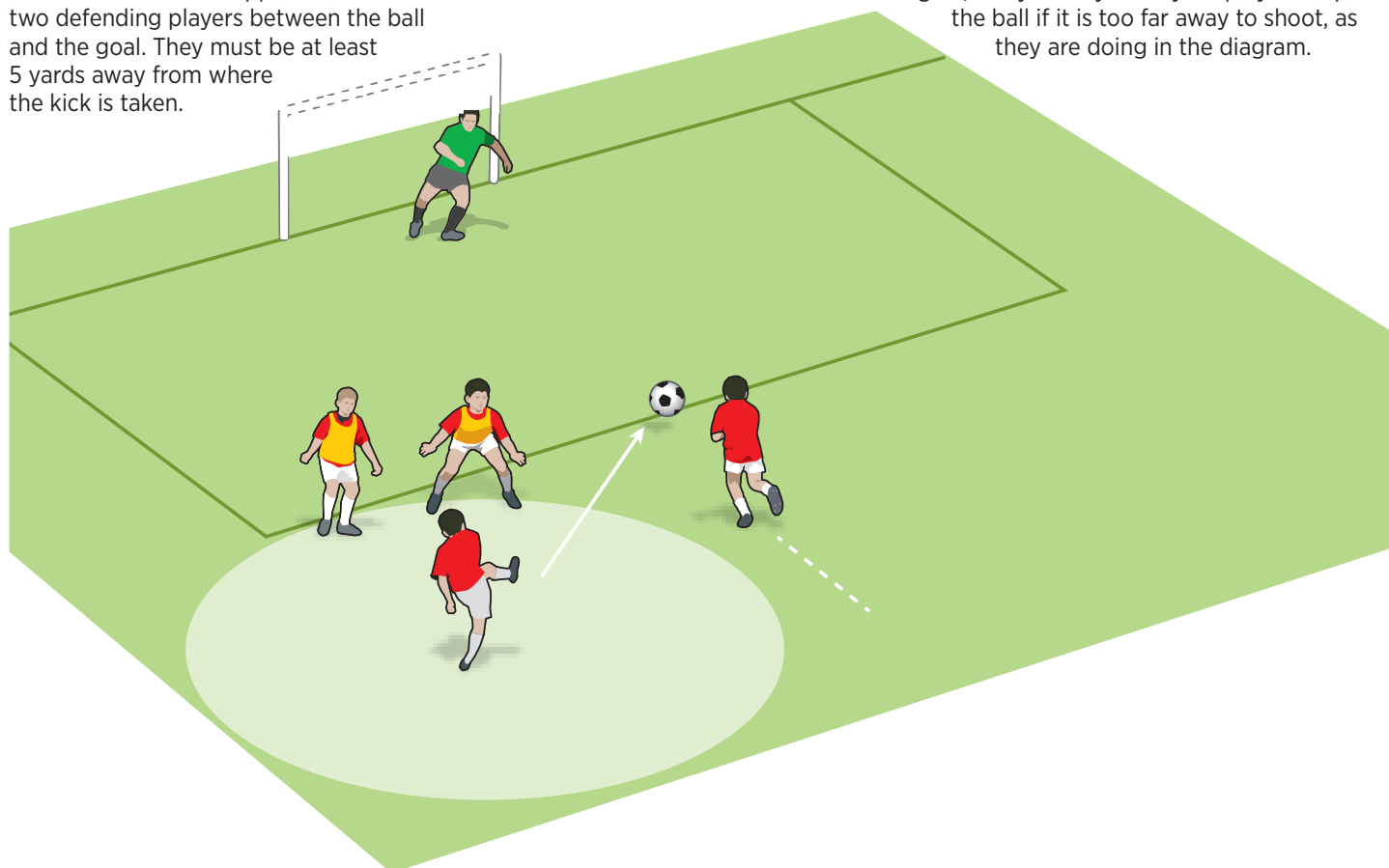
# Free kick

## ACTIVITY: THE LAW

### CALL OUT

“Understand the ball must be still when it is kicked” • “Understand one player takes the kick” • “Kick the ball forwards”

**1** Set up a free kick situation in front of goal, but not in the penalty area. You will need a player to take the kick and a team mate to support him. Put two defending players between the ball and the goal. They must be at least 5 yards away from where the kick is taken.



**2** When you say “go”, the player takes the kick. All free kicks are direct at this age group, so he is allowed to shoot straight at goal, but you may want your players to pass the ball if it is too far away to shoot, as they are doing in the diagram.

**3** Whether the free kick taker chooses to pass the ball or shoot at goal, the important thing is to avoid hitting the players directly in front of him, as this may prompt a counter-attack.

**4** Once the free kick has been taken, the kicker cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.

**5** In reality there are few free kicks in mini soccer, but players need to know what to do in the event of one being given to them.

### LAWS OF SOCCER

#### Free kick

All free kicks are direct and opponents must be 5 yards from the position the infringement took place.

The ball must be stationary when kicked.

### How many players do I need?

We’ve used five here, but get all your players to have a go. Remember to change round your attackers, defenders and goalkeeper.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot



U7-U8 | RESTARTS 4

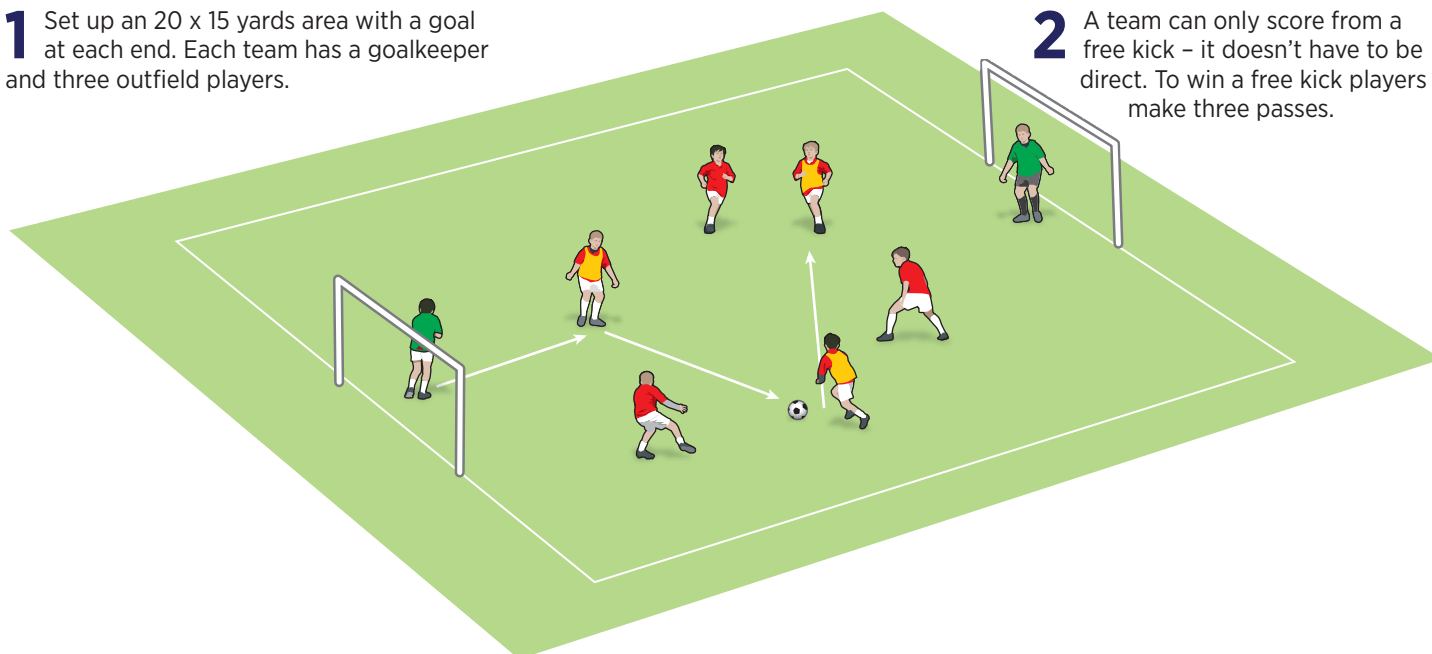
# Free kick

**GAME: FREE KICK GAME**

## CALL OUT

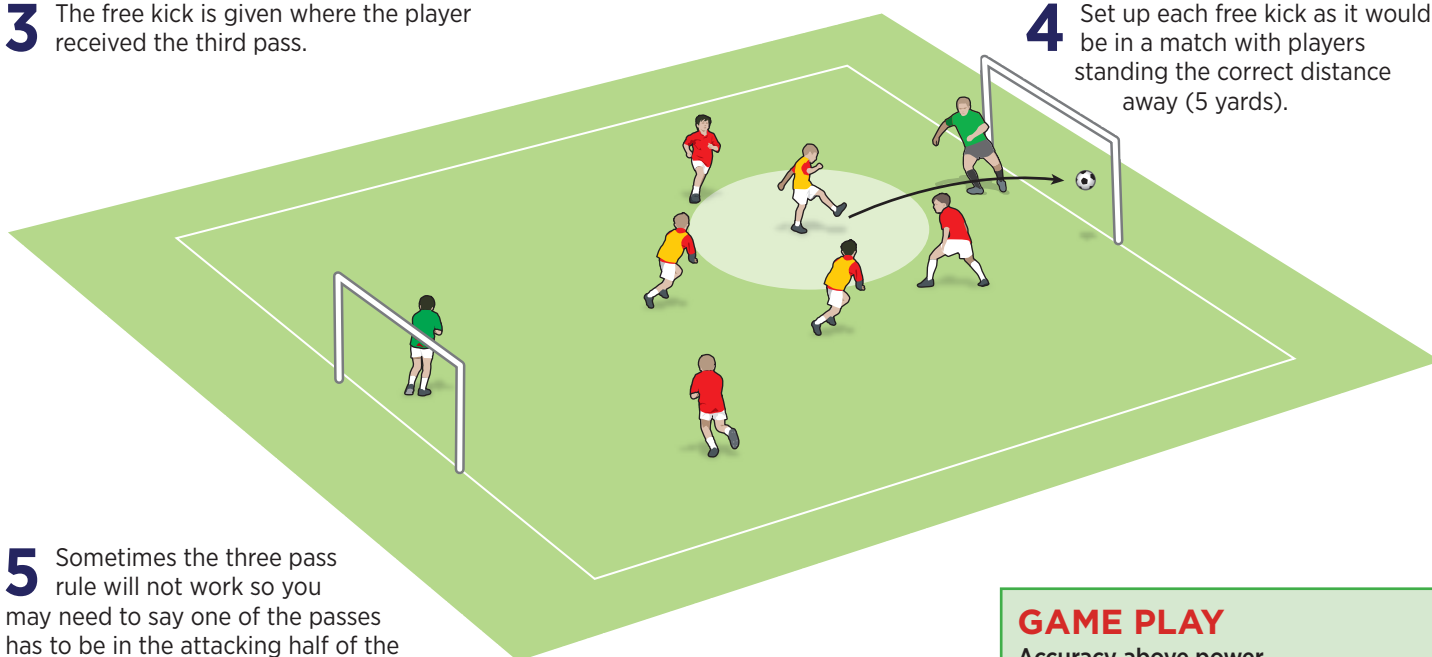
“Understand the ball must be still when it is kicked” • “Understand one player takes the kick” • “Kick the ball forwards”

**1** Set up an 20 x 15 yards area with a goal at each end. Each team has a goalkeeper and three outfield players.



**2** A team can only score from a free kick - it doesn't have to be direct. To win a free kick players make three passes.

**3** The free kick is given where the player received the third pass.



**4** Set up each free kick as it would be in a match with players standing the correct distance away (5 yards).

**5** Sometimes the three pass rule will not work so you may need to say one of the passes has to be in the attacking half of the pitch if the passing is too easy, and if it is too hard say they only need two passes.

### GAME PLAY

Accuracy above power.

Every player takes one.

Try passing moves and ask the players for free kick ideas.

### How many players do I need?

I played a 4v4 game for this practice.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

# Penalty kick

## ACTIVITY: THE LAW

### CALL OUT

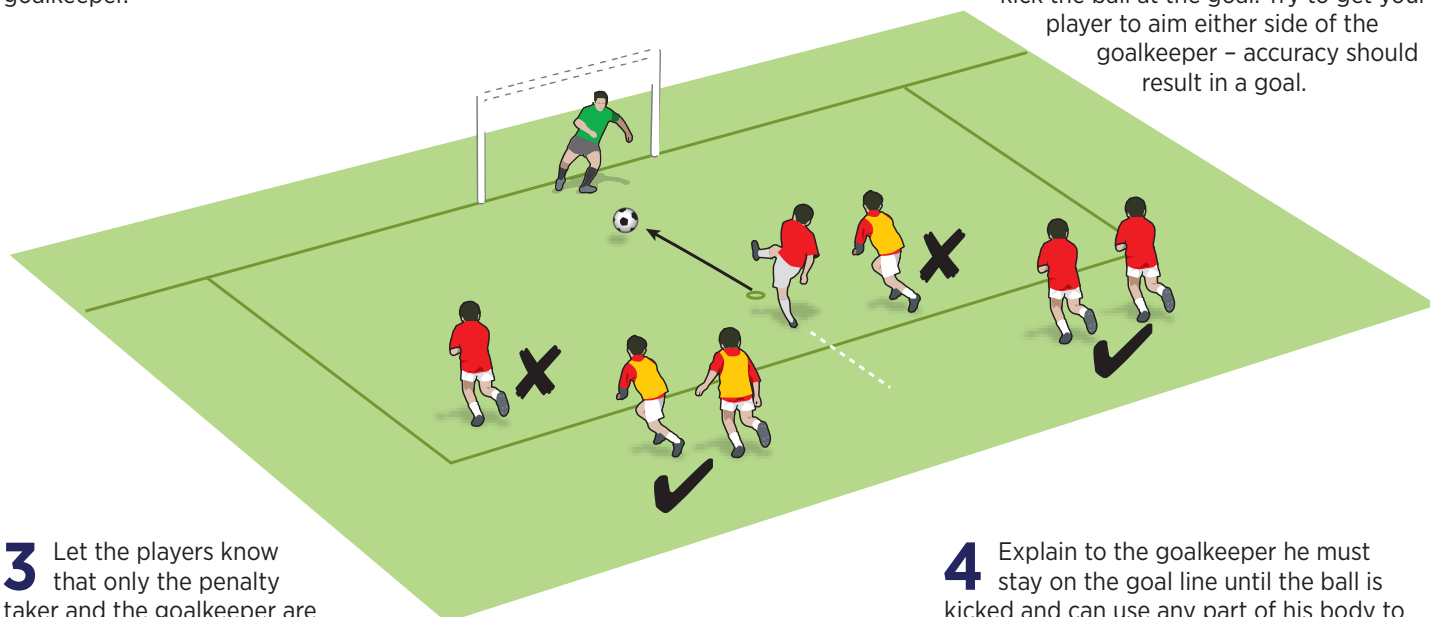
“Understand the ball is kicked from a static position” • “Understand one player takes the kick” • “Kick the ball forwards” • “Only kick the ball once”

**1** Set up using a penalty area, a penalty spot with a goal and a goalkeeper.

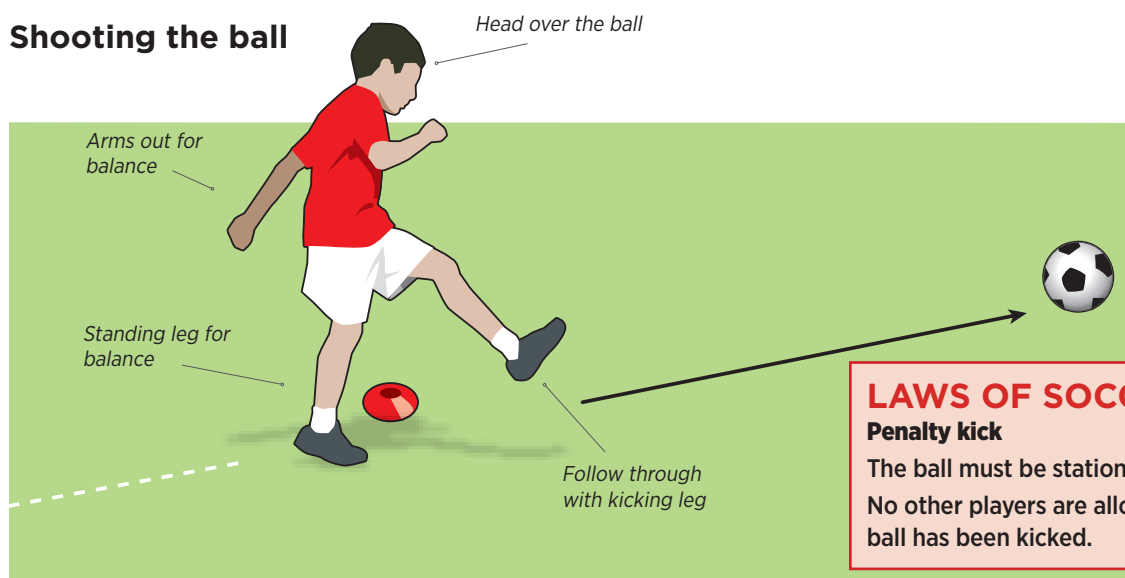
**2** The players should take turns to take penalties – take a four step run up and kick the ball at the goal. Try to get your player to aim either side of the goalkeeper – accuracy should result in a goal.

**3** Let the players know that only the penalty taker and the goalkeeper are allowed in the penalty area when the kick is taken.

**4** Explain to the goalkeeper he must stay on the goal line until the ball is kicked and can use any part of his body to stop the shot.



## Shooting the ball



### LAWS OF SOCCER

#### Penalty kick

The ball must be stationary when kicked.  
No other players are allowed in the area until the ball has been kicked.

### How many players do I need?

Get all your players to have a go.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	--->
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	--->

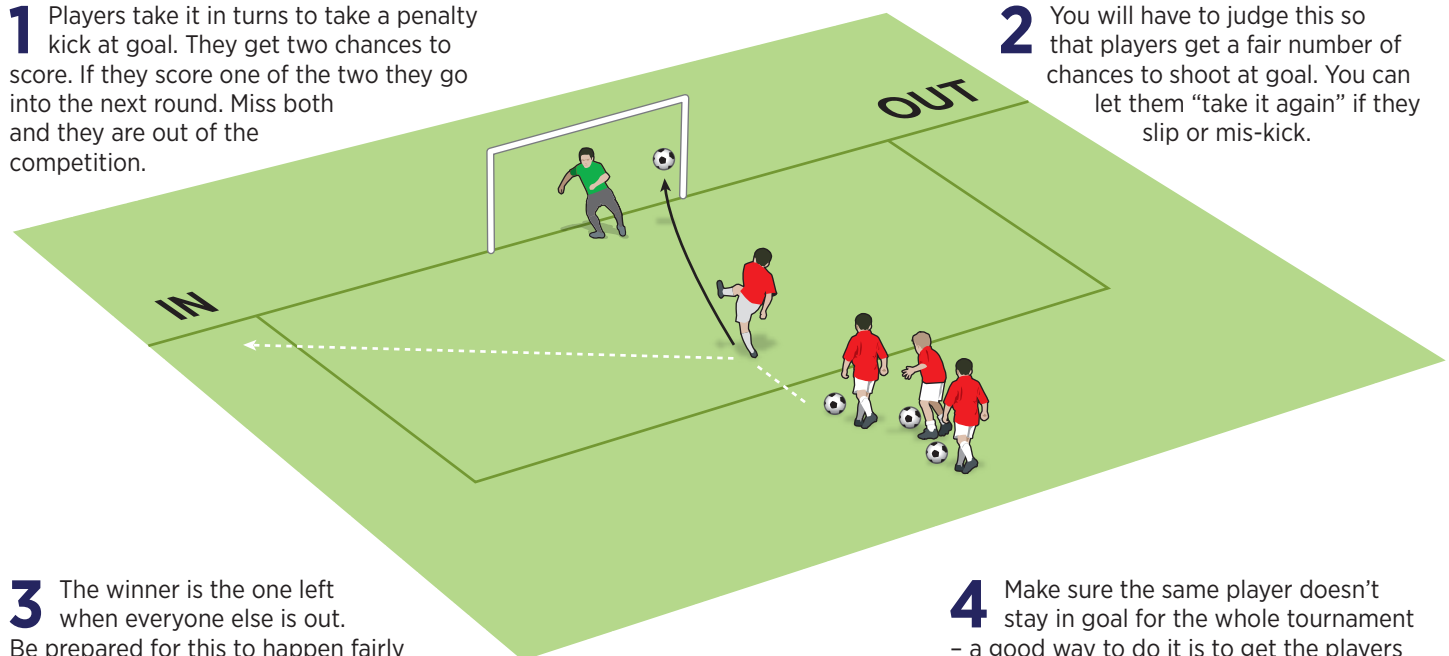
U7-U8 | RESTARTS 5

# Penalty kick

**GAME: IN OR OUT**

**CALL OUT** "Understand the ball is kicked from a static position" • "Understand one player takes the kick" • "Kick the ball forwards" • "Only kick the ball once"

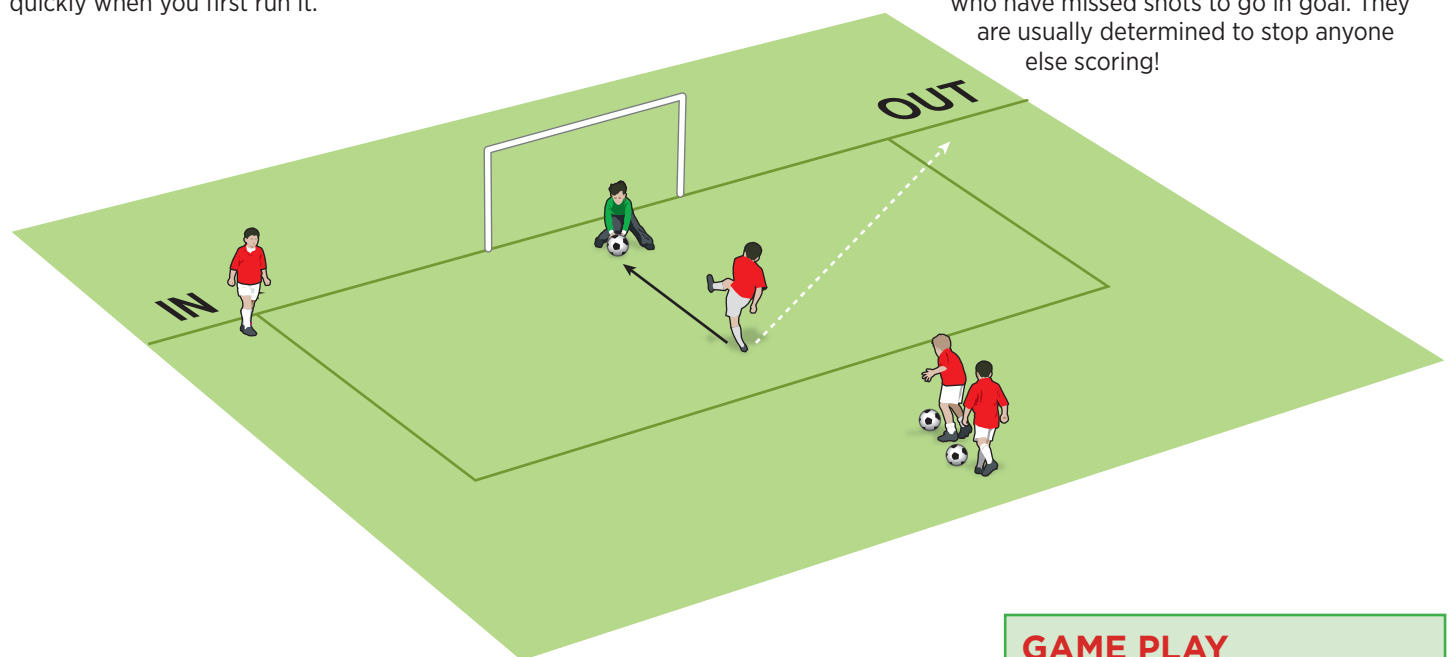
**1** Players take it in turns to take a penalty kick at goal. They get two chances to score. If they score one of the two they go into the next round. Miss both and they are out of the competition.



**2** You will have to judge this so that players get a fair number of chances to shoot at goal. You can let them "take it again" if they slip or mis-kick.

**3** The winner is the one left when everyone else is out. Be prepared for this to happen fairly quickly when you first run it.

**4** Make sure the same player doesn't stay in goal for the whole tournament – a good way to do it is to get the players who have missed shots to go in goal. They are usually determined to stop anyone else scoring!



**GAME PLAY**  
Accuracy above power.  
Every player takes one.  
React to a rebound.

## How many players do I need?

Get all your players to have a go.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot



# **EasiCoach**

**SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES**

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## **U7-U8**

### **GOALKEEPING**

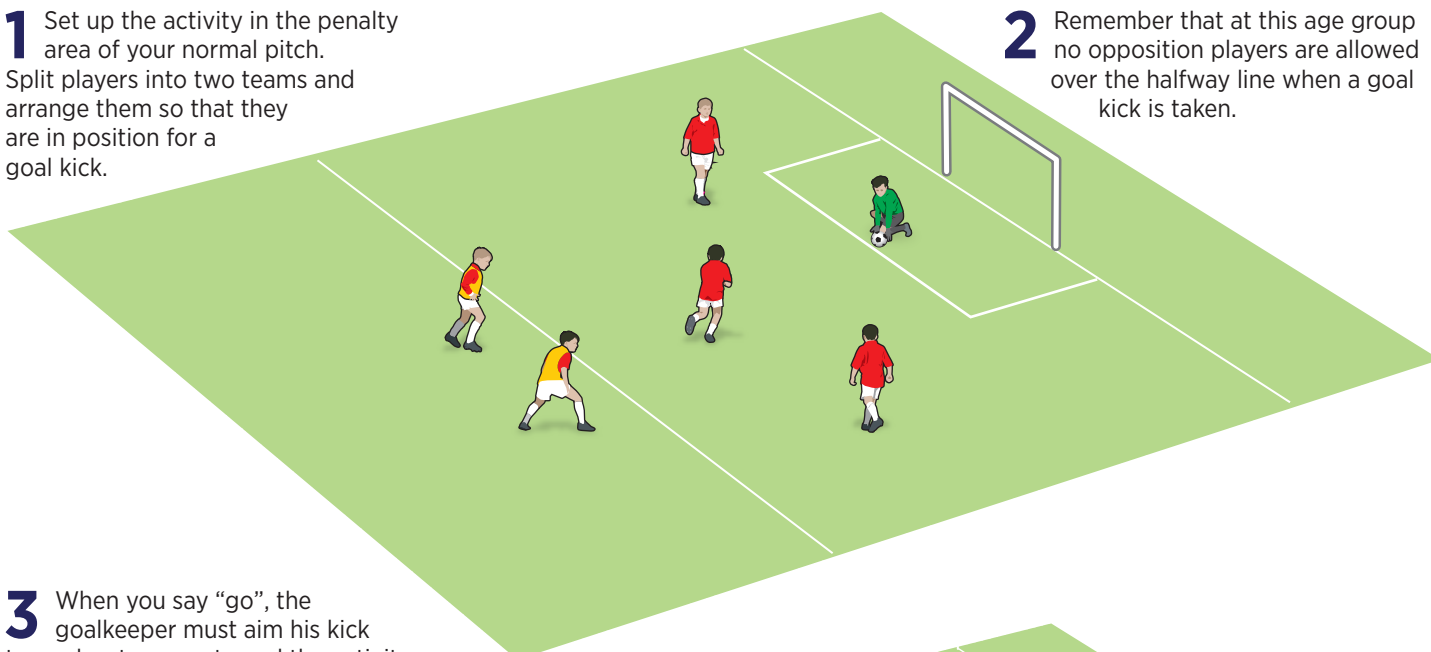
# Goal kick

## ACTIVITY: HOW TO TAKE A GOAL KICK

### CALL OUT

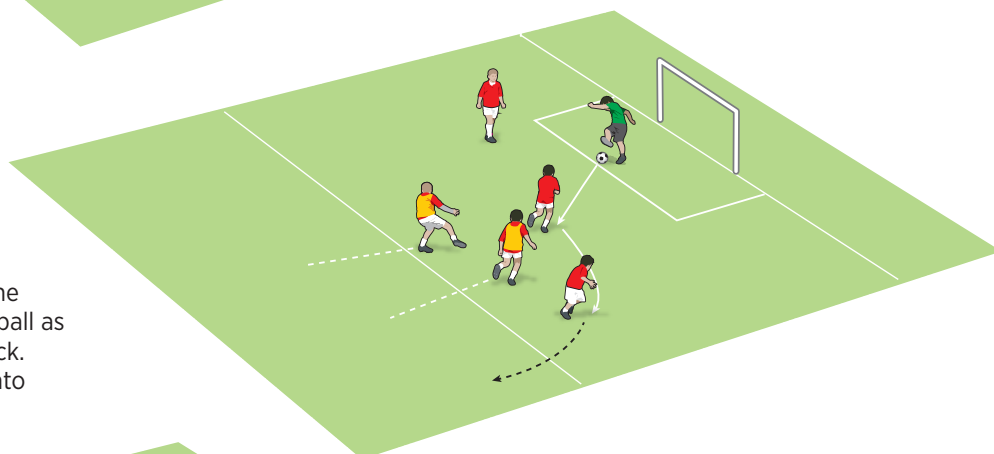
“Place the ball on the forward edge of the goal area” • “Kick the ball away from goal towards a team mate”

**1** Set up the activity in the penalty area of your normal pitch. Split players into two teams and arrange them so that they are in position for a goal kick.

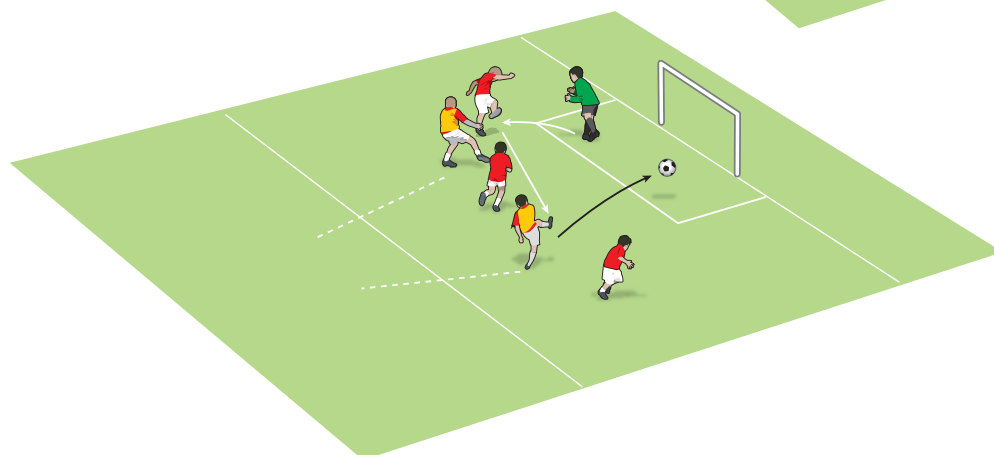


**2** Remember that at this age group no opposition players are allowed over the halfway line when a goal kick is taken.

**3** When you say “go”, the goalkeeper must aim his kick towards a team mate and the activity plays from there.



**4** The opposition players can cross the halfway line and challenge for the ball as soon as the goalkeeper has made his kick. Play on until the ball goes out of play, into the opposition’s half or a goal is scored.



**5** Set this up and play it a few times, making sure that the kick goes to different players. Swap the teams round so that everyone gets a chance to take the kick and challenge the kick.

### How many players do I need?

Use your whole squad.

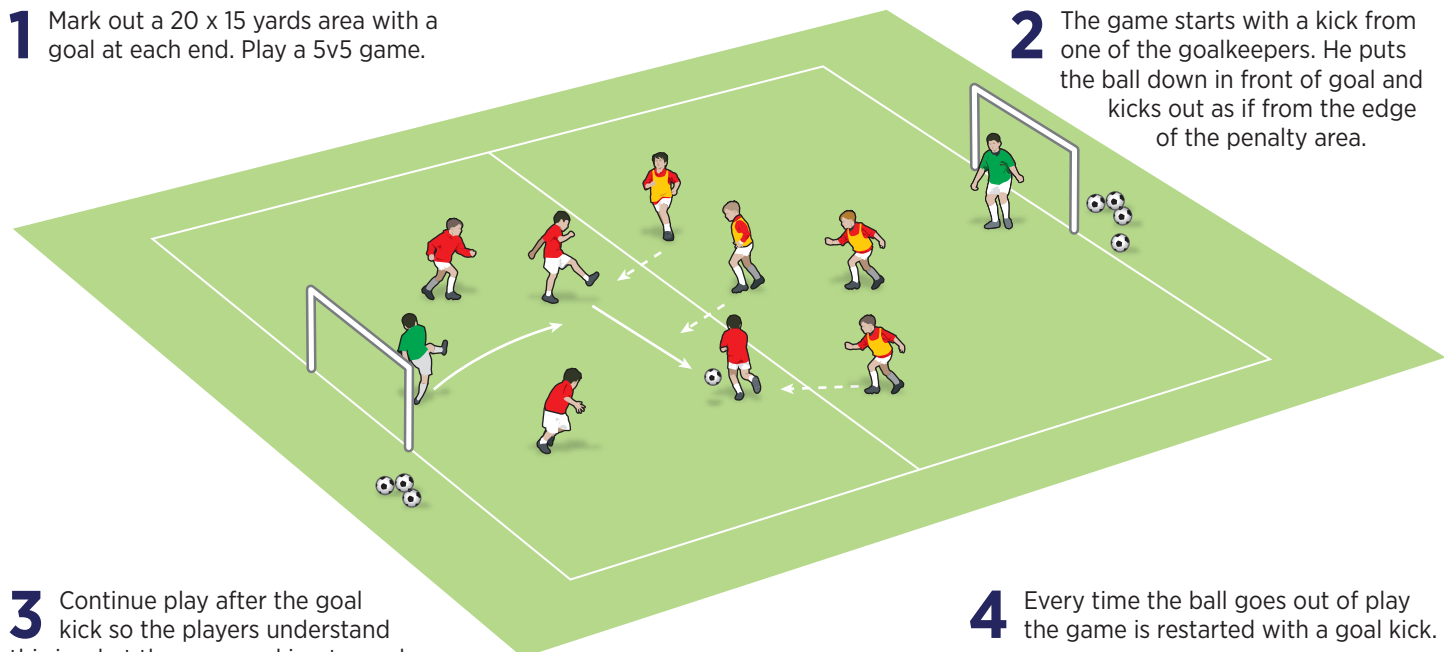
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	--->	—>

# Goal kick

**GAME: GOAL KICK**

**CALL OUT** "Place the ball on the forward edge of the goal area" • "Kick the ball away from goal towards a team mate"

**1** Mark out a 20 x 15 yards area with a goal at each end. Play a 5v5 game.



**2** The game starts with a kick from one of the goalkeepers. He puts the ball down in front of goal and kicks out as if from the edge of the penalty area.

**3** Continue play after the goal kick so the players understand this is what they are working towards in a match.

**4** Every time the ball goes out of play the game is restarted with a goal kick.



**5** This is all about practising goal kicks in a match relevant situation, so make sure all the rules about opponents being in the other half of the pitch are applied with each goal kick.

**GAME PLAY**  
Timing is key to the goal kicks.  
Be positive.  
Praise players for good attempts.

## How many players do I need?

We played a 5v5 for this game and used 10 players with no subs.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

# Stopping the ball

## ACTIVITY: TOUCH CONE AND REACT

### CALL OUT

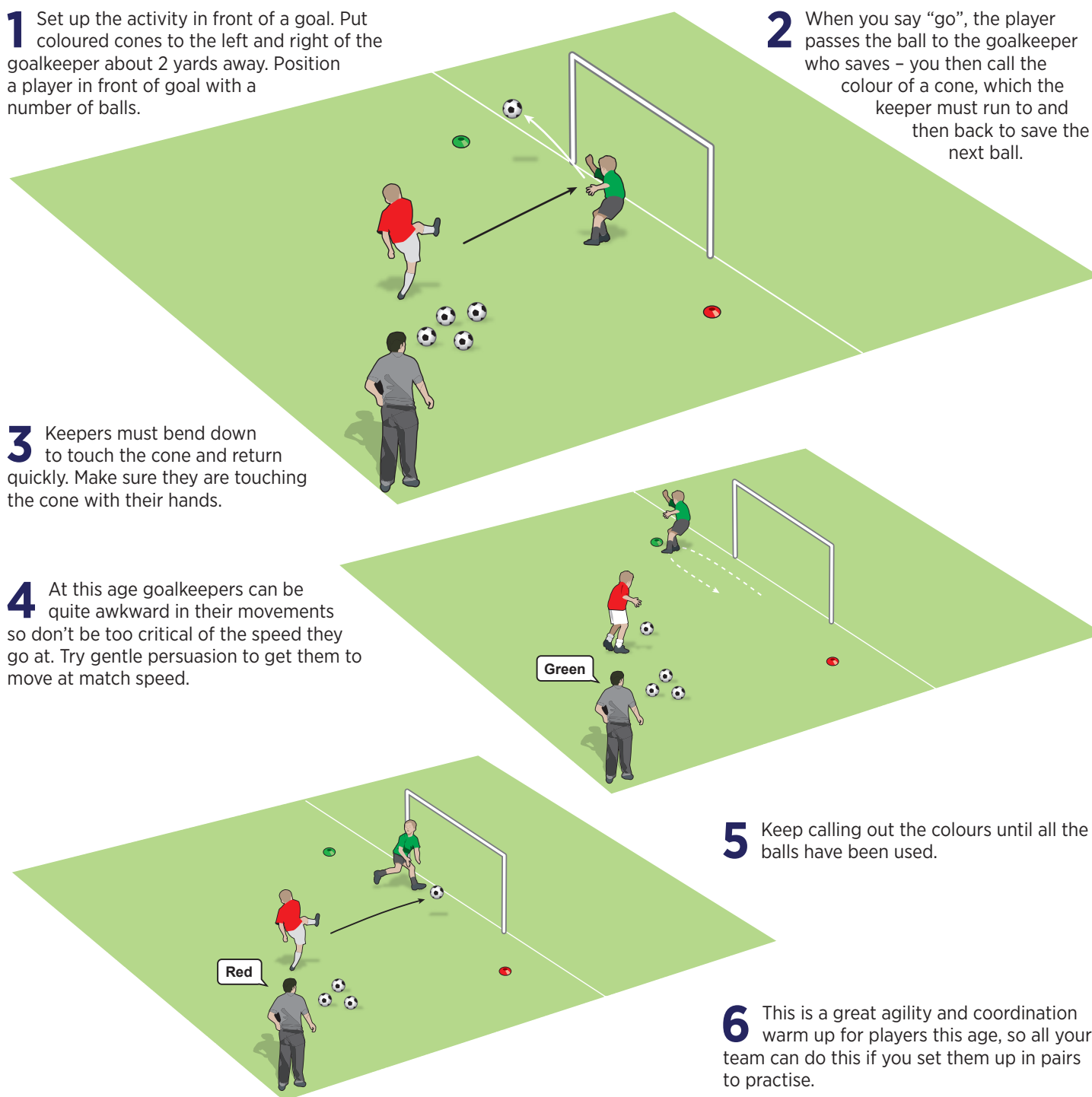
“Use any part of your body to block the ball” • “Hands and feet are best” •  
“Stop the ball from going into the goal”

**1** Set up the activity in front of a goal. Put coloured cones to the left and right of the goalkeeper about 2 yards away. Position a player in front of goal with a number of balls.

**3** Keepers must bend down to touch the cone and return quickly. Make sure they are touching the cone with their hands.

**4** At this age goalkeepers can be quite awkward in their movements so don't be too critical of the speed they go at. Try gentle persuasion to get them to move at match speed.

**2** When you say “go”, the player passes the ball to the goalkeeper who saves – you then call the colour of a cone, which the keeper must run to and then back to save the next ball.



**5** Keep calling out the colours until all the balls have been used.

**6** This is a great agility and coordination warm up for players this age, so all your team can do this if you set them up in pairs to practise.

### How many players do I need?

All your players can have a go.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot



# Stopping the ball

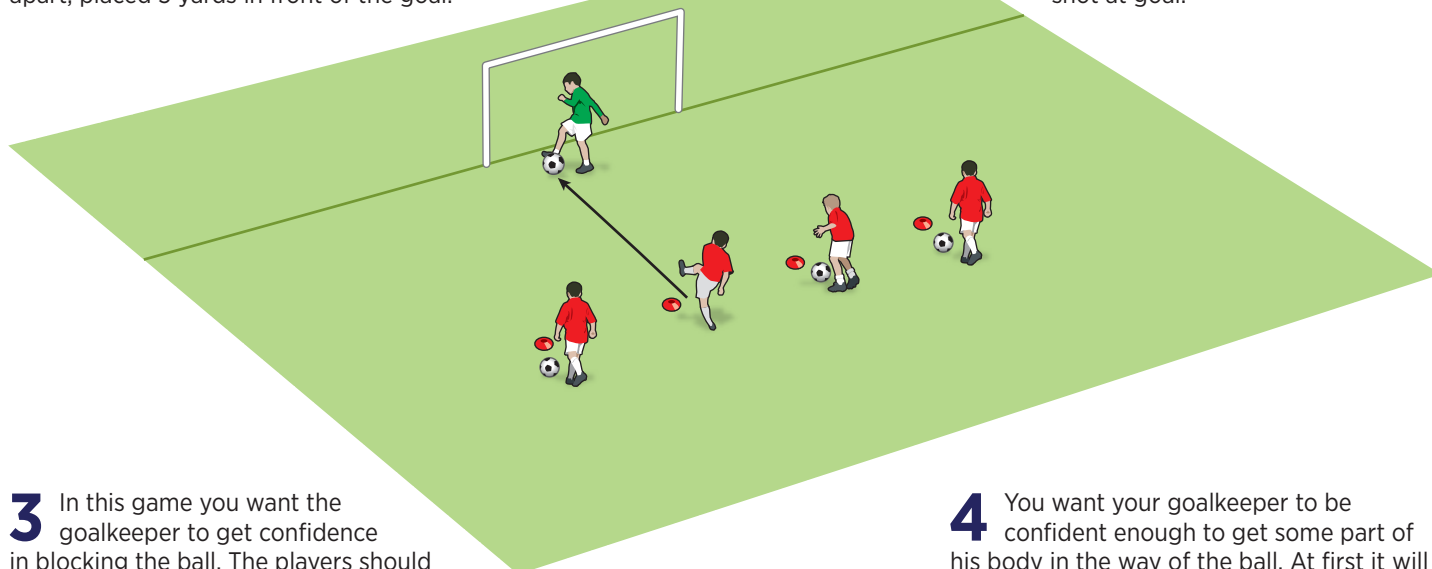
**GAME: FOUR DIRECTIONS**

**CALL OUT**

“Use any part of your body to block the ball” • “Hands and feet are best” •  
“Stop the ball from going into the goal”

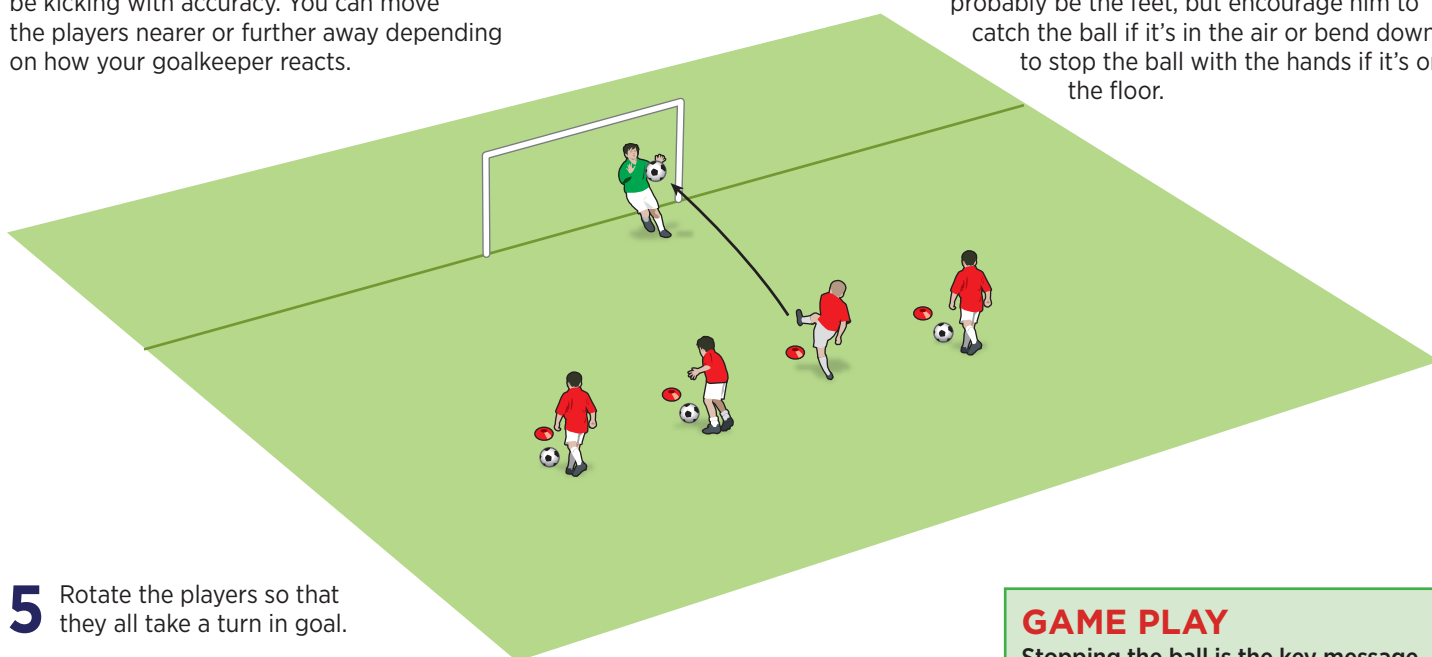
**1** Set up the activity in front of a goal. You need four cones spread about 2 yards apart, placed 5 yards in front of the goal.

**2** A player stands on each cone with a ball and in turn they each take a shot at goal.



**3** In this game you want the goalkeeper to get confidence in blocking the ball. The players should be kicking with accuracy. You can move the players nearer or further away depending on how your goalkeeper reacts.

**4** You want your goalkeeper to be confident enough to get some part of his body in the way of the ball. At first it will probably be the feet, but encourage him to catch the ball if it's in the air or bend down to stop the ball with the hands if it's on the floor.



**5** Rotate the players so that they all take a turn in goal.

**GAME PLAY**

Stopping the ball is the key message. Don't criticise for any poor blocking. Praise players for good attempts to stop the ball.

**How many players do I need?**

You need five players for this game.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	—>

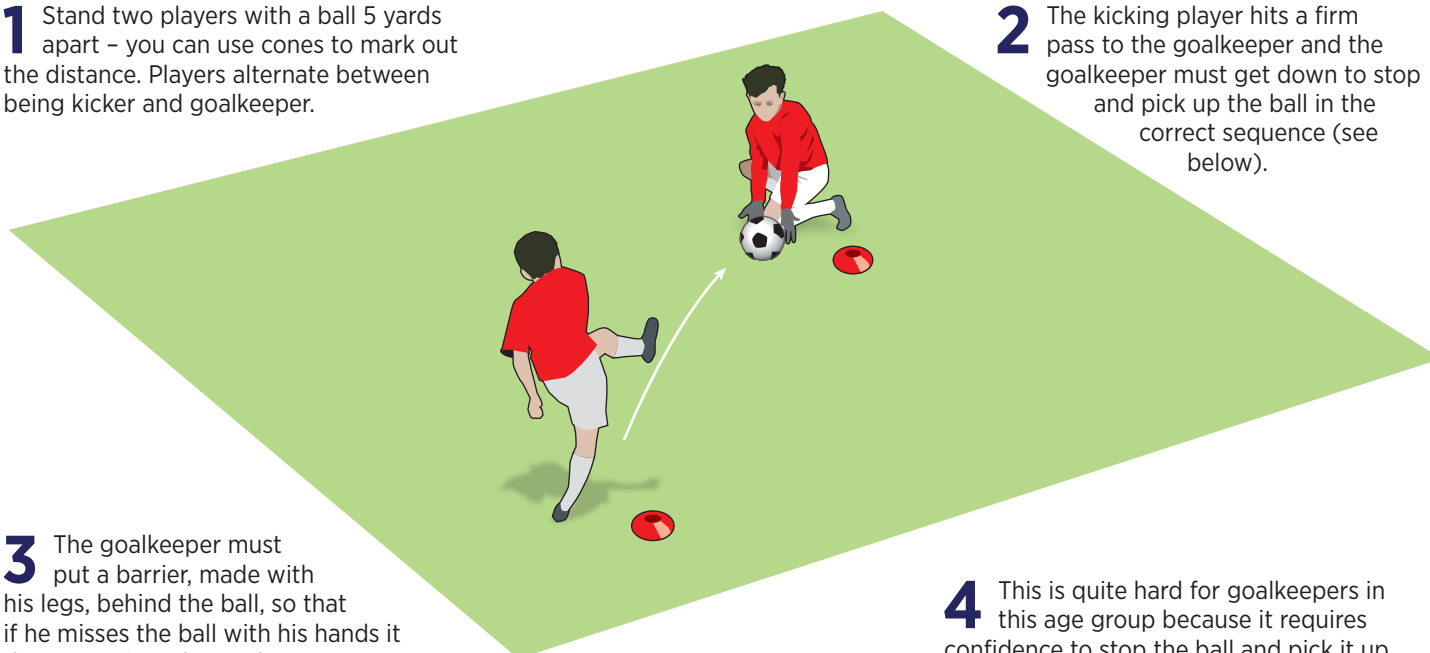
## Picking up the ball

### ACTIVITY: THE LONG BARRIER

#### CALL OUT

“Bend down on one knee” • “Put your body behind the ball” • “Pick up and clutch to your chest”

**1** Stand two players with a ball 5 yards apart – you can use cones to mark out the distance. Players alternate between being kicker and goalkeeper.

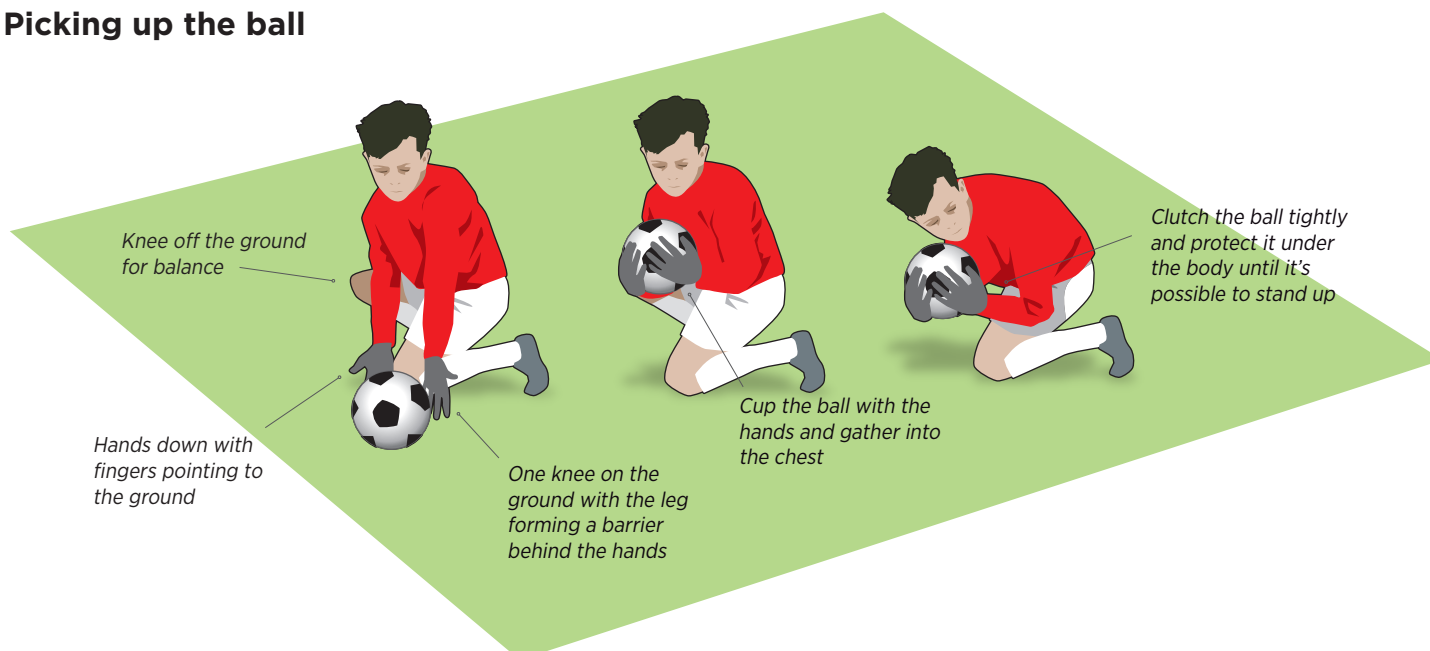


**2** The kicking player hits a firm pass to the goalkeeper and the goalkeeper must get down to stop and pick up the ball in the correct sequence (see below).

**3** The goalkeeper must put a barrier, made with his legs, behind the ball, so that if he misses the ball with his hands it doesn't go into the goal.

**4** This is quite hard for goalkeepers in this age group because it requires confidence to stop the ball and pick it up. When in a crowd of players it is difficult to judge when to pick the ball up.

### Picking up the ball



#### How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

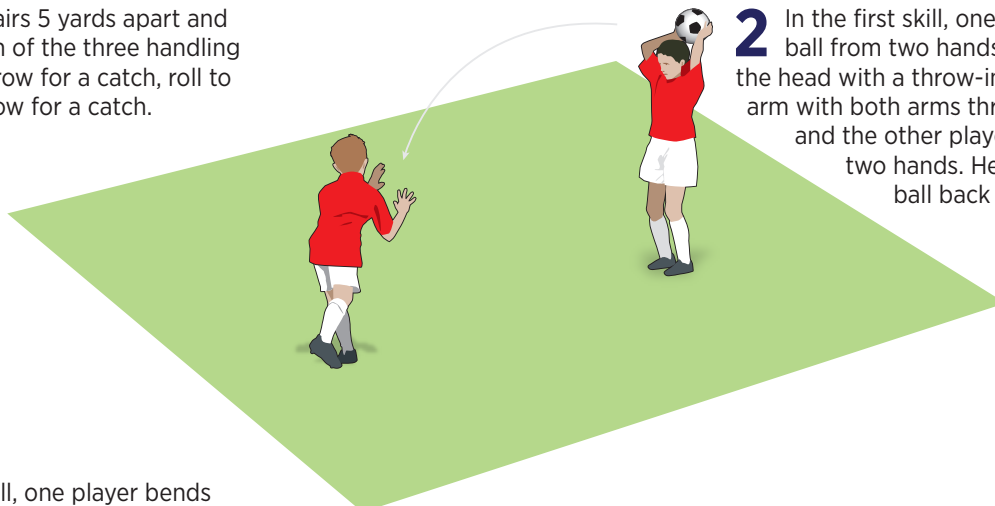
# Handling the ball

**ACTIVITY: USE AN EASY ACTION**

**CALL OUT**

“Catch with two hands” • “Throw to an unmarked player” • “Roll it to his feet” • “Bowl the ball overarm”

**1** Players work in pairs 5 yards apart and they practise each of the three handling skills – two armed throw for a catch, roll to feet and overarm throw for a catch.

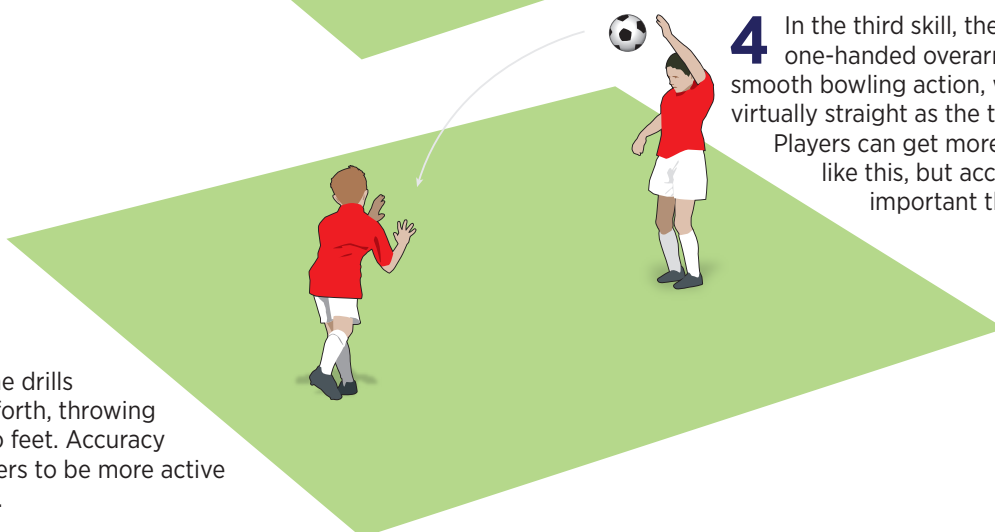


**2** In the first skill, one player throws the ball from two hands, either from over the head with a throw-in motion or under arm with both arms throwing the ball, and the other player catches with two hands. He then throws the ball back to his partner.

**3** In the second skill, one player bends down and rolls the ball with two hands to his partner's feet and the partner passes back by kicking the ball. In this pair the players do three rolls then swap roller and passer.



**4** In the third skill, the players use a one-handed overarm throw using a smooth bowling action, with the arm kept virtually straight as the throw is made. Players can get more distance throwing like this, but accuracy is the most important thing here.



**5** Players repeat the drills going back and forth, throwing to hand or bowling to feet. Accuracy is key to getting players to be more active when they go in goal.

**How many players do I need?**

All your players work on this – you can do it in pairs.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->
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# EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

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## U8

### BALL CONTROL

# Pass the ball 3 yards to a team mate

## ACTIVITY: PASSING IN PAIRS

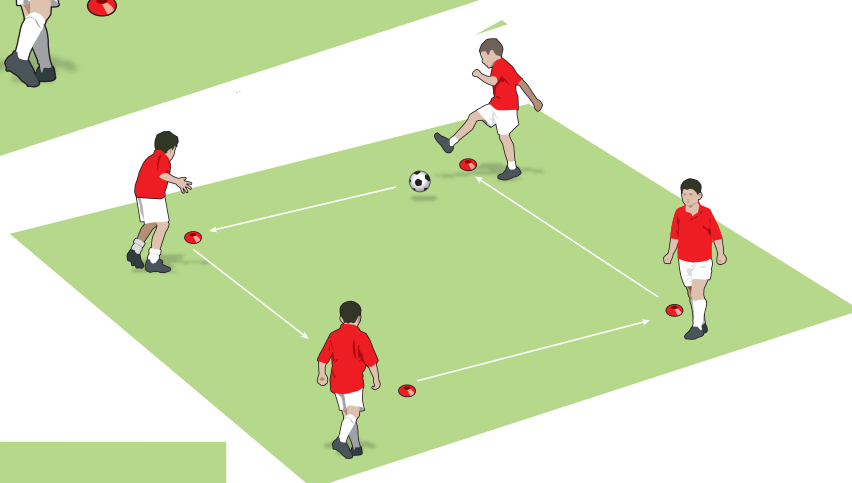
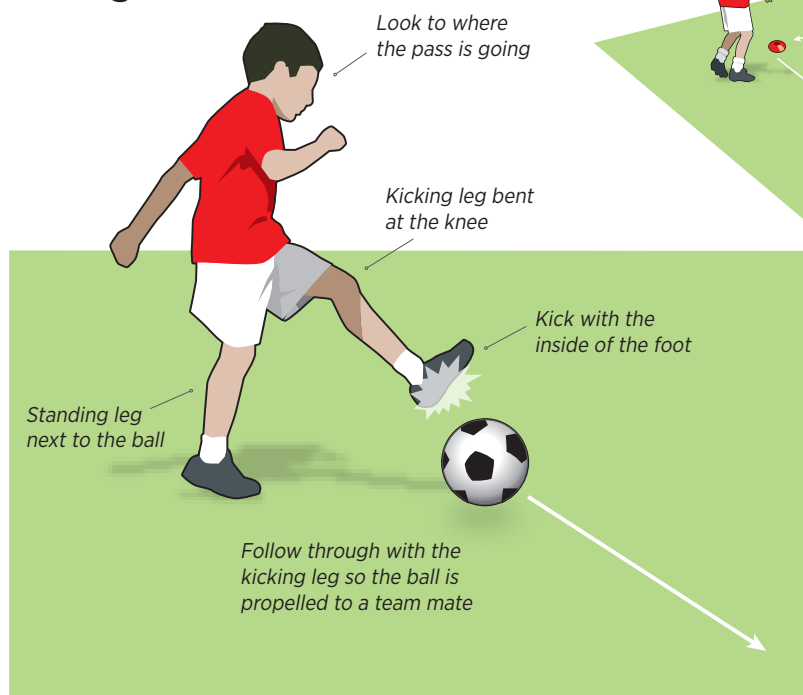
**CALL OUT** "Look to where the pass is going" • "Use the inside of the foot or the laces"

**1** Set up a 3 x 3 yards area with a cone on each corner. Put a player on each cone.

**2** When you say "go", players pass across the square from corner to corner. The added difficulty is that they must concentrate on their own passes and not hit the ball of the other pair as they pass and receive.

**3** You want to hear plenty of communication during this activity, the players need to be calling for the ball, telling their partner they are ready to receive it.

### Passing the ball



**4** You can easily adapt the activity so the players pass a ball around the square rather than play across the square so it goes from corner to corner around the square.

### How many players do I need?

You need four players in two pairs per square.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
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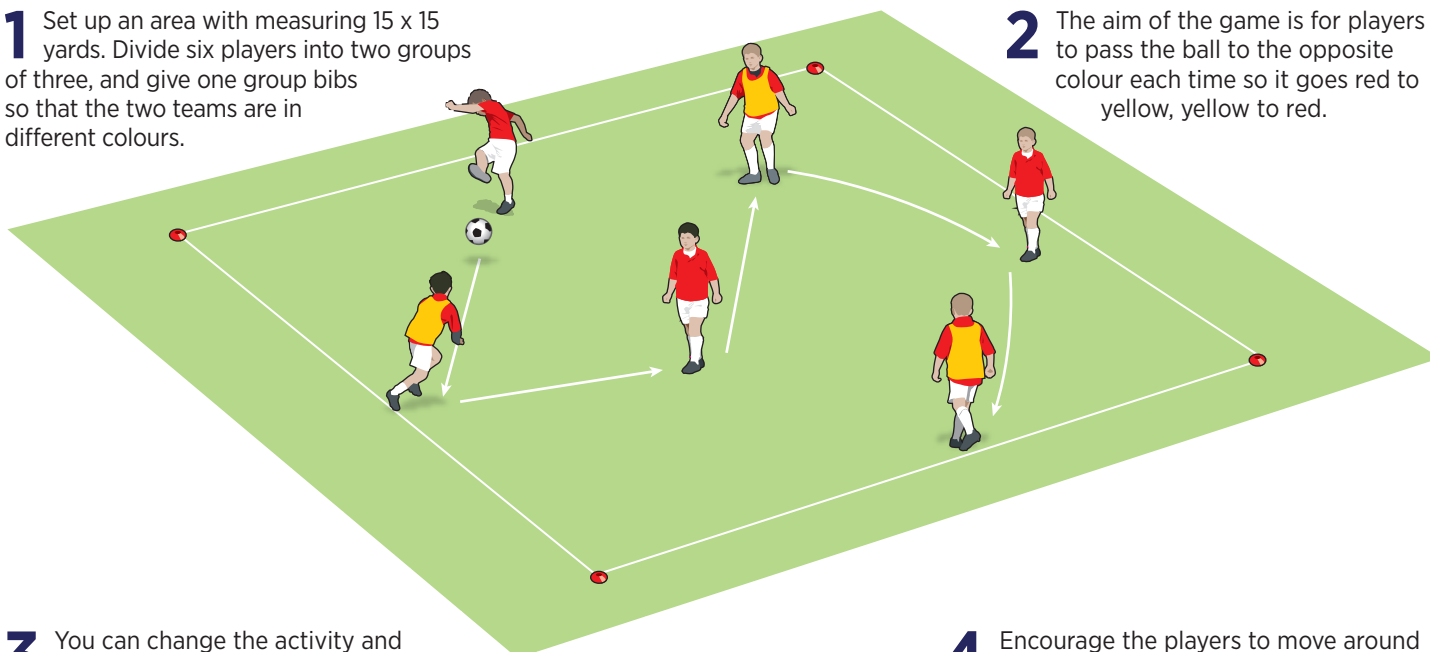
Run with the ball      Shot

# Pass the ball 3 yards to a team mate

**GAME: ODDS AND EVENS**

**CALL OUT** "Look to where the pass is going" • "Use the inside of the foot or the laces"

**1** Set up an area with measuring 15 x 15 yards. Divide six players into two groups of three, and give one group bibs so that the two teams are in different colours.



**2** The aim of the game is for players to pass the ball to the opposite colour each time so it goes red to yellow, yellow to red.

**3** You can change the activity and add another ball so they are just passing in their threes. Alternatively, you can call out colour combinations that they have to follow, such as red, red, yellow, yellow.



**4** Encourage the players to move around the area. You can add squares of cones as "no entry" zones, which will force them to spread out more.

**5** Use the Call Out phrases as they are passing to remind them what they should be doing.

**GAME PLAY**  
Players should know that they pass to the player in a different colour. Ask them to try and move to make passing easier. Passing and movement.

## How many players do I need?

I used six players with two teams of three players but any combinations of numbers will work.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
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	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)

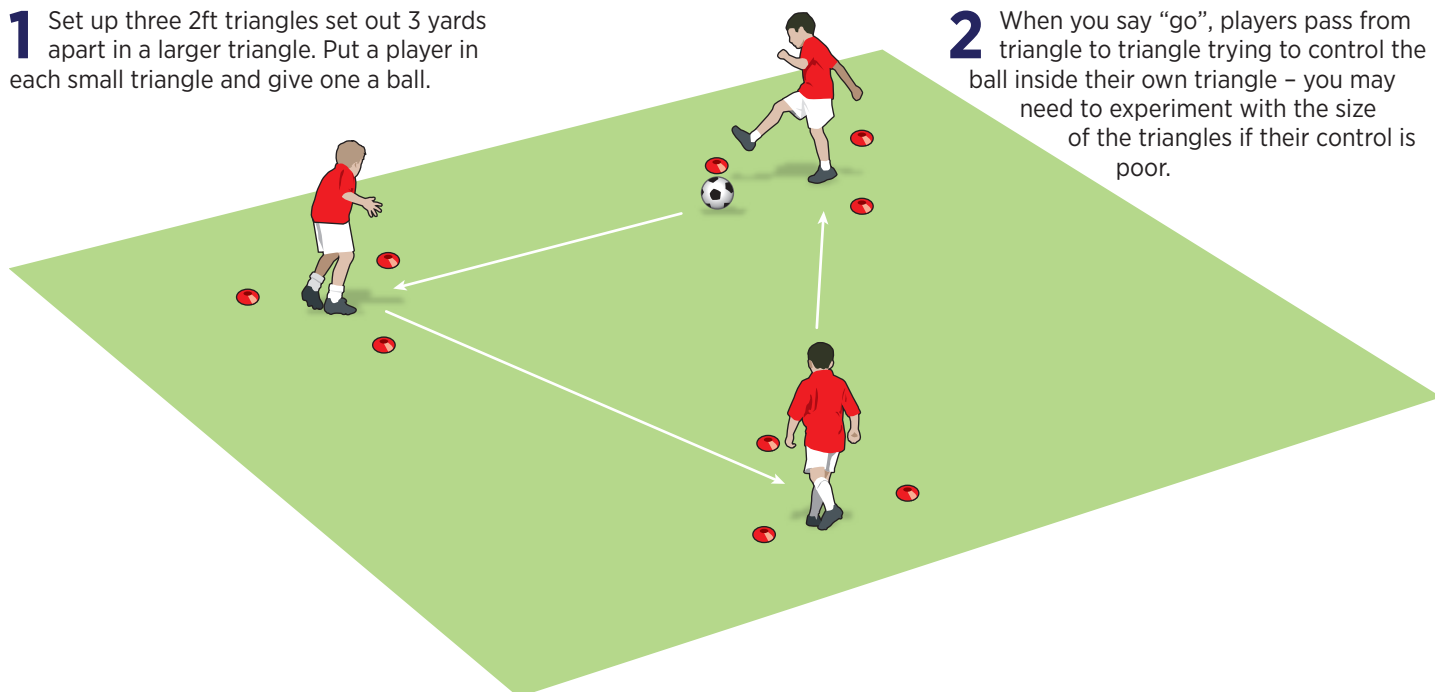
## Receive and control the ball (3 yards)

### ACTIVITY: CUSHION CONTROL IN TRIANGLES

#### CALL OUT

“Call for the ball” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Use the inside of the foot to cushion and stop the ball”

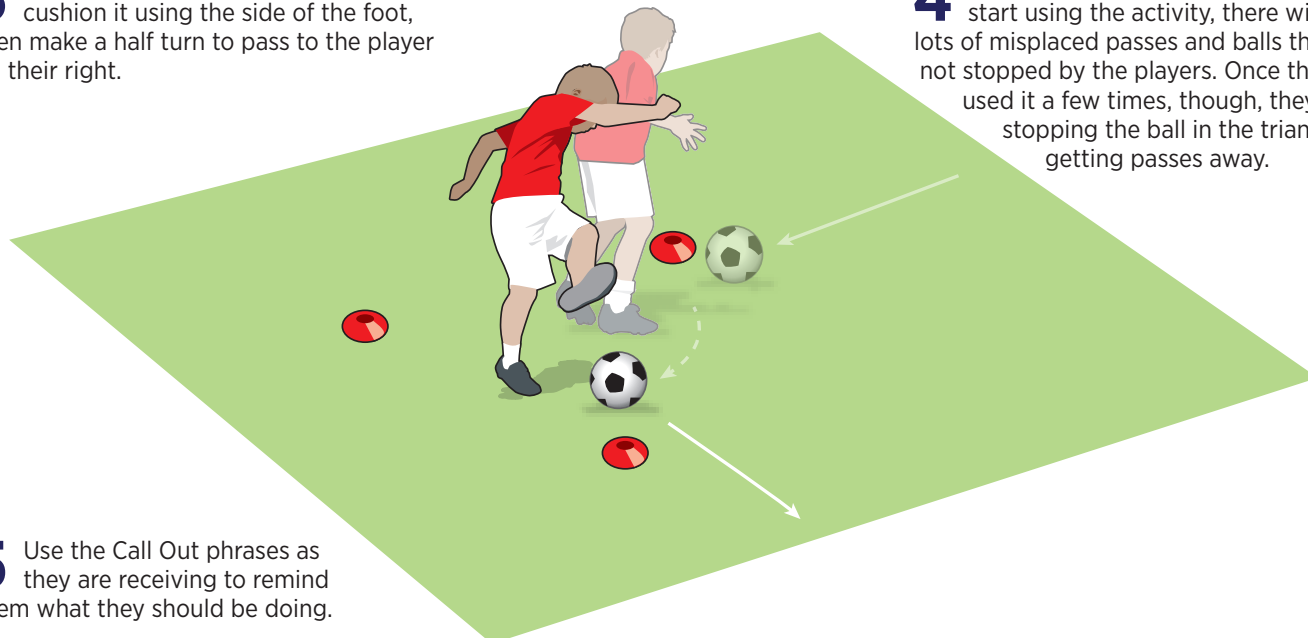
**1** Set up three 2ft triangles set out 3 yards apart in a larger triangle. Put a player in each small triangle and give one a ball.



**2** When you say “go”, players pass from triangle to triangle trying to control the ball inside their own triangle – you may need to experiment with the size of the triangles if their control is poor.

**3** Players have to receive the ball and cushion it using the side of the foot, then make a half turn to pass to the player on their right.

**4** Don't expect miracles when you first start using the activity, there will be lots of misplaced passes and balls that are not stopped by the players. Once they have used it a few times, though, they will be stopping the ball in the triangle and getting passes away.



**5** Use the Call Out phrases as they are receiving to remind them what they should be doing.

#### How many players do I need?

Players worked in threes in the activity I ran but you can change it to suit the numbers available.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->
	----->	----->



## Receive and control the ball (3 yards)

### GAME: SPRINT RACE

#### CALL OUT

“Call for the ball” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Use the inside of the foot to cushion and stop the ball”

**1** Set out a “race track” by marking out a 1 x 1 yard square of cones and placing a single cone 5 yards away, then repeat the set up about two yards away so that the race tracks run parallel to each other.

**2** Put a team of three players behind each of the single cones and give each team a ball.

**3** The players must sprint to the square, receive a pass, control the ball and pass it back, then sprint back to the starting cone.

**4** The winning team is the one that gets all three balls to the square and back first.

**5** If the ball does not get stopped in the square it goes back to the passer and gets passed again.

#### GAME PLAY

Players should try and play as quickly as possible.  
Watch for poor technique as the game puts pressure on the players.  
Lots of agility and technique in this game.

#### How many players do I need?

This is a race to receive and pass back each of the three balls – I used six players in the game.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

# Dribble with the ball 5 yards with one half turn

## ACTIVITY: THREE CONE TURN

### CALL OUT

“Touch the ball three times as it moves the distance” • “Keep the ball close in front of you” • “Use turns to keep the ball”

**1** Set out three cones with the middle cone 4 yards from the first and the last cone off at a 45 degree angle 1 yard away. Stand two players on each end cone. Each player has a ball. Here we've set up two lines of cones.

**2** When you say “go”, one player dribbles the ball from the first cone to the middle, makes a half turn and dribbles on to the last cone.

**3** When he reaches the last cone, one of the players at that cone dribbles his ball back in the other direction.

**4** Continue until all players have dribbled the ball in both directions.

**5** The turn is not a hard one for players to make but concentration is needed when they do it. Watch for players running off course as they try to make the turn.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in fours in the activity to give them time to watch and learn from their team mates.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

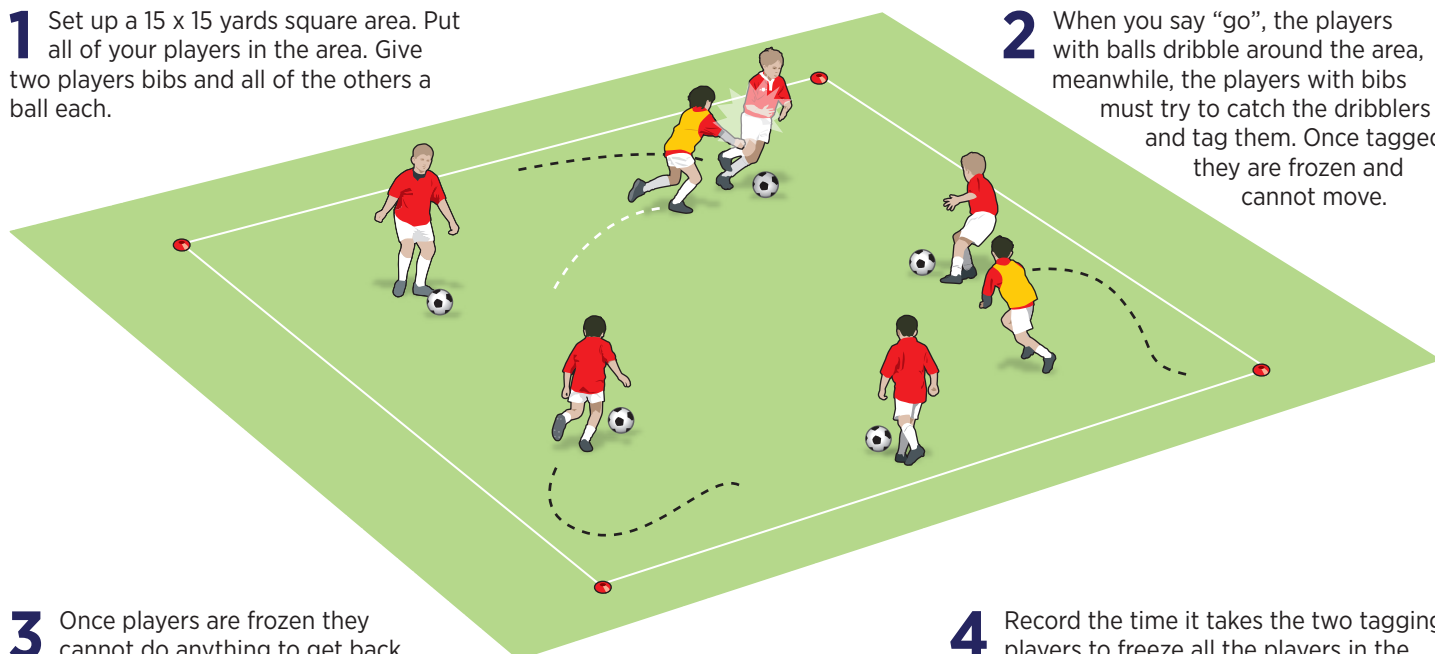
# Dribble with the ball 5 yards with one half turn

**GAME: FROZEN**

## CALL OUT

“Touch the ball three times as it moves the distance” • “Keep the ball close in front of you” • “Use turns to keep the ball”

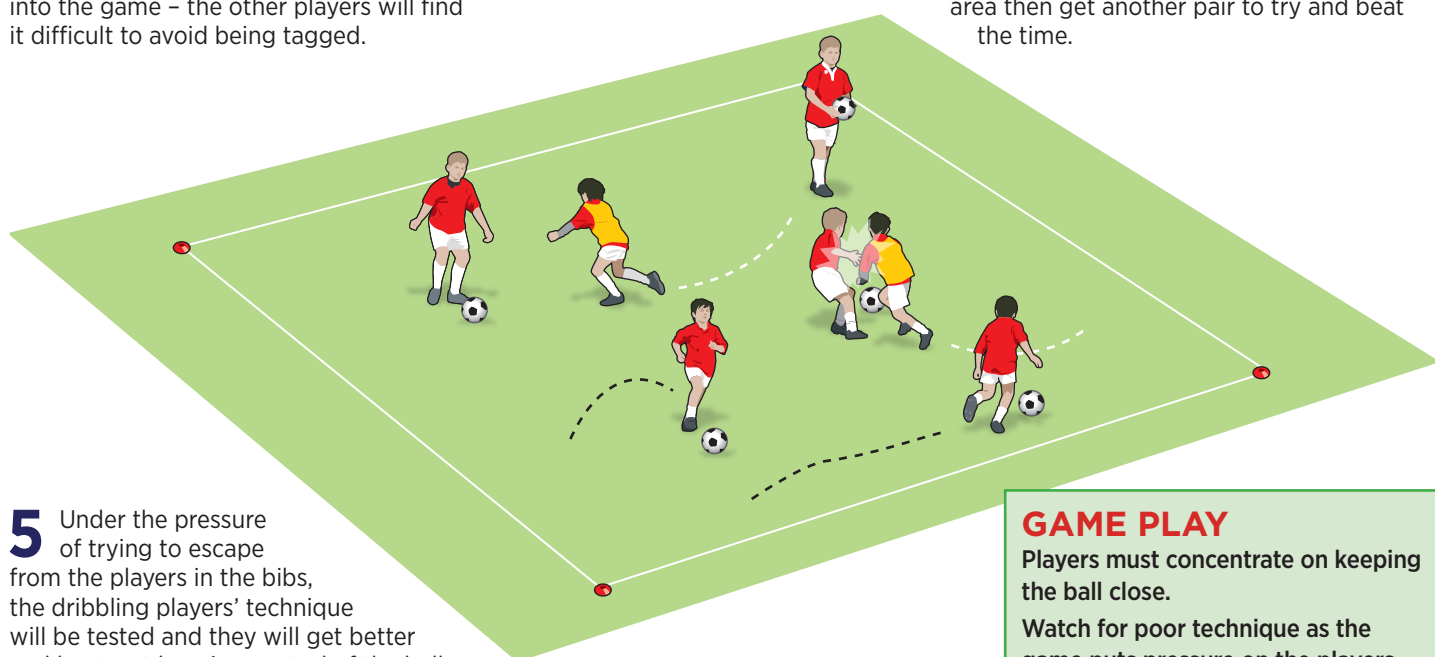
**1** Set up a 15 x 15 yards square area. Put all of your players in the area. Give two players bibs and all of the others a ball each.



**2** When you say “go”, the players with balls dribble around the area, meanwhile, the players with bibs must try to catch the dribblers and tag them. Once tagged they are frozen and cannot move.

**3** Once players are frozen they cannot do anything to get back into the game – the other players will find it difficult to avoid being tagged.

**4** Record the time it takes the two tagging players to freeze all the players in the area then get another pair to try and beat the time.



**5** Under the pressure of trying to escape from the players in the bibs, the dribbling players’ technique will be tested and they will get better and better at keeping control of the ball.

### GAME PLAY

Players must concentrate on keeping the ball close.

Watch for poor technique as the game puts pressure on the players.

Players will learn quickly how to control the ball so they can keep running away from the taggers.

### How many players do I need?

Your whole squad can play this, so any number you like in an area 15 x 15 yards (use a smaller area if you have fewer than seven players).

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)

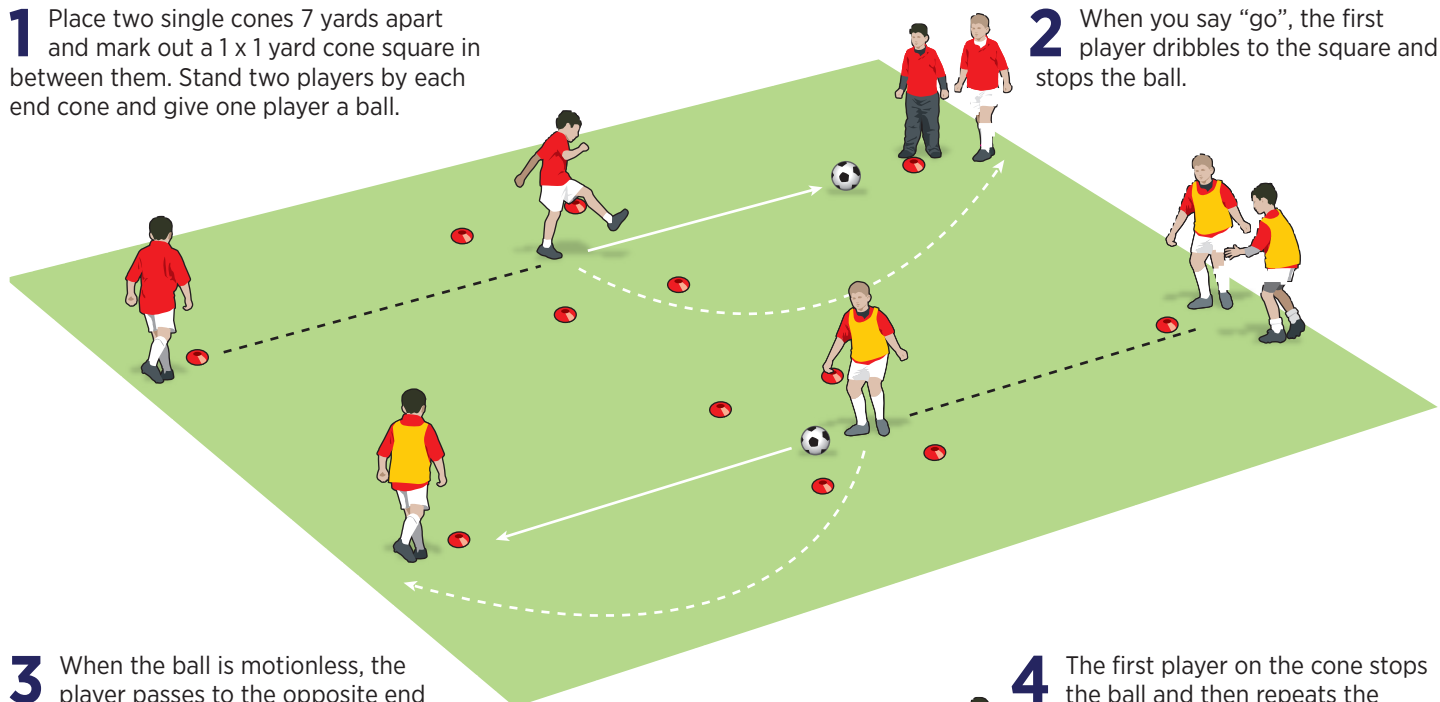
# Dribble 3 yards, stop and pass 3 yards

## ACTIVITY: SQUARE FULL STOPS

### CALL OUT

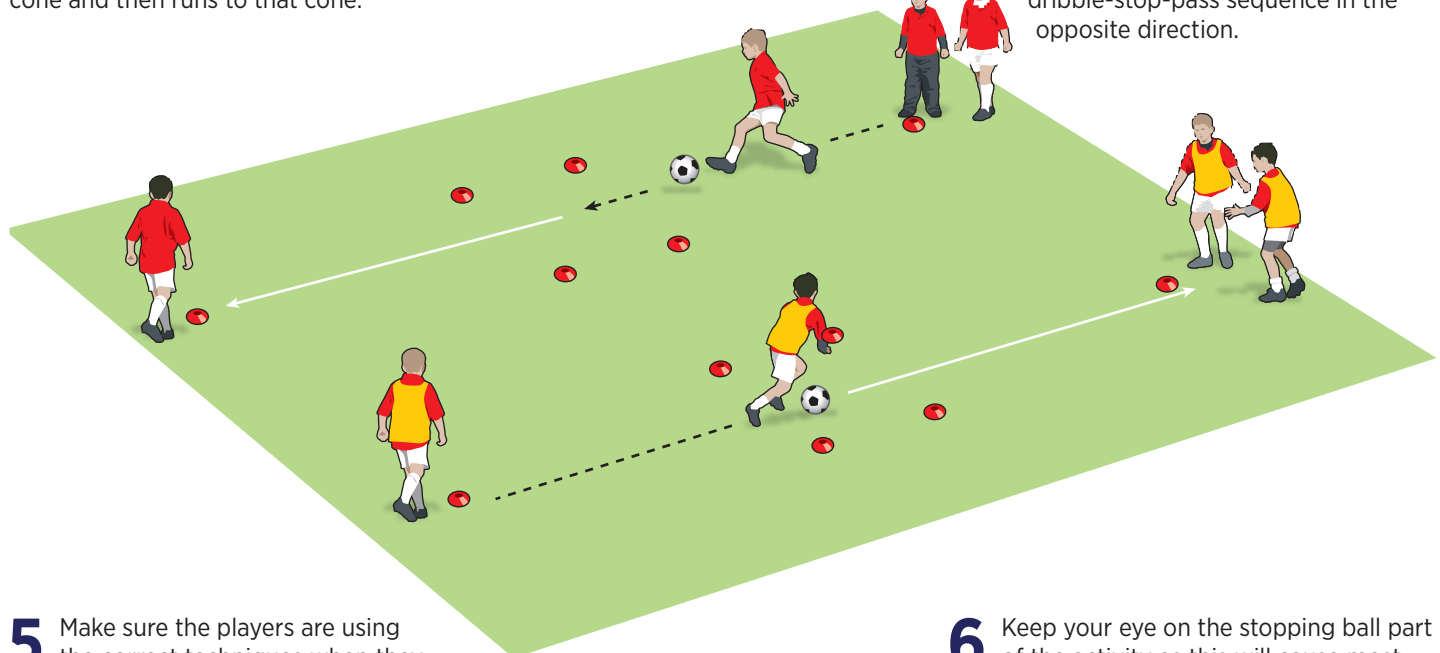
“Touch the ball to move forward” • “Stop the ball in the square with the sole of your foot” • “Pass to a team mate”

**1** Place two single cones 7 yards apart and mark out a 1 x 1 yard cone square in between them. Stand two players by each end cone and give one player a ball.



**2** When you say “go”, the first player dribbles to the square and stops the ball.

**3** When the ball is motionless, the player passes to the opposite end cone and then runs to that cone.



**4** The first player on the cone stops the ball and then repeats the dribble-stop-pass sequence in the opposite direction.

**5** Make sure the players are using the correct techniques when they are dribbling, stopping and passing the ball and try to get them to speed up once they have done it a few times.

**6** Keep your eye on the stopping ball part of the activity as this will cause most problems for the players.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in fours in the activity so they can stop and watch their team mates and learn from them.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)

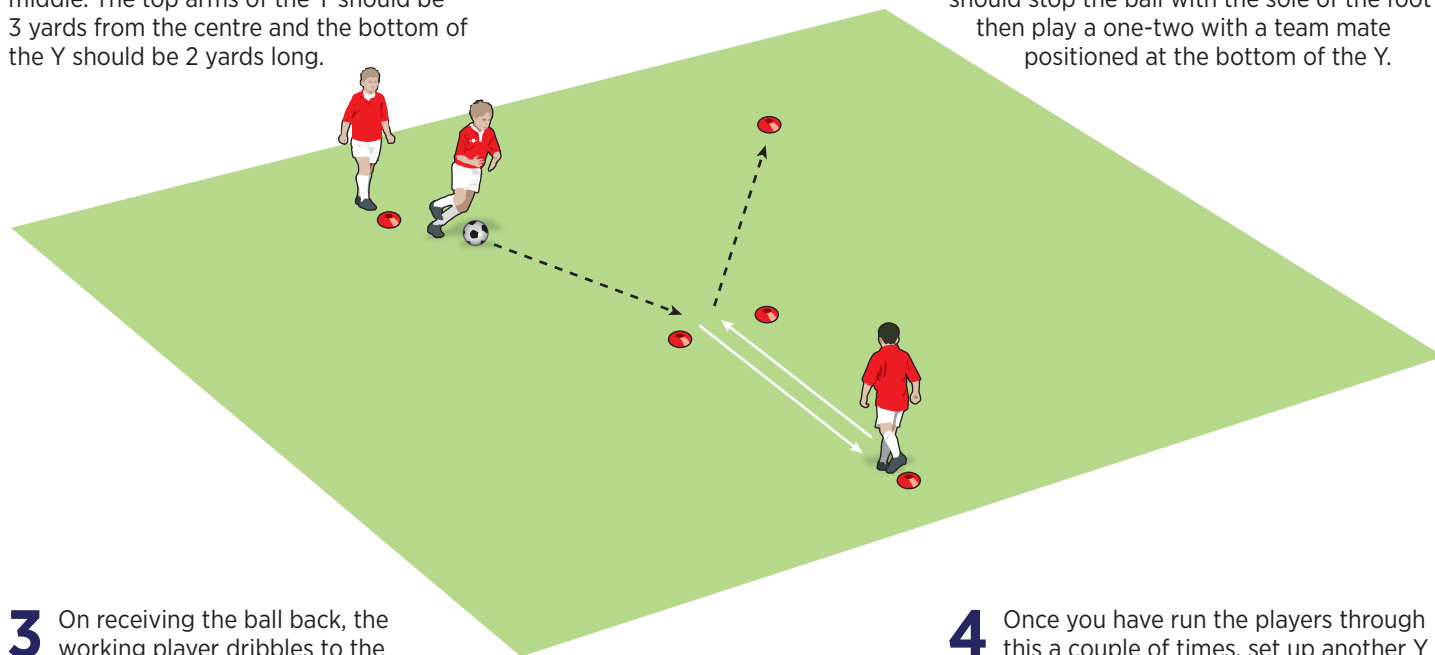
## Dribble 3 yards, stop and pass 3 yards

**GAME: DRIBBLE ONE-TWO REACT**

### CALL OUT

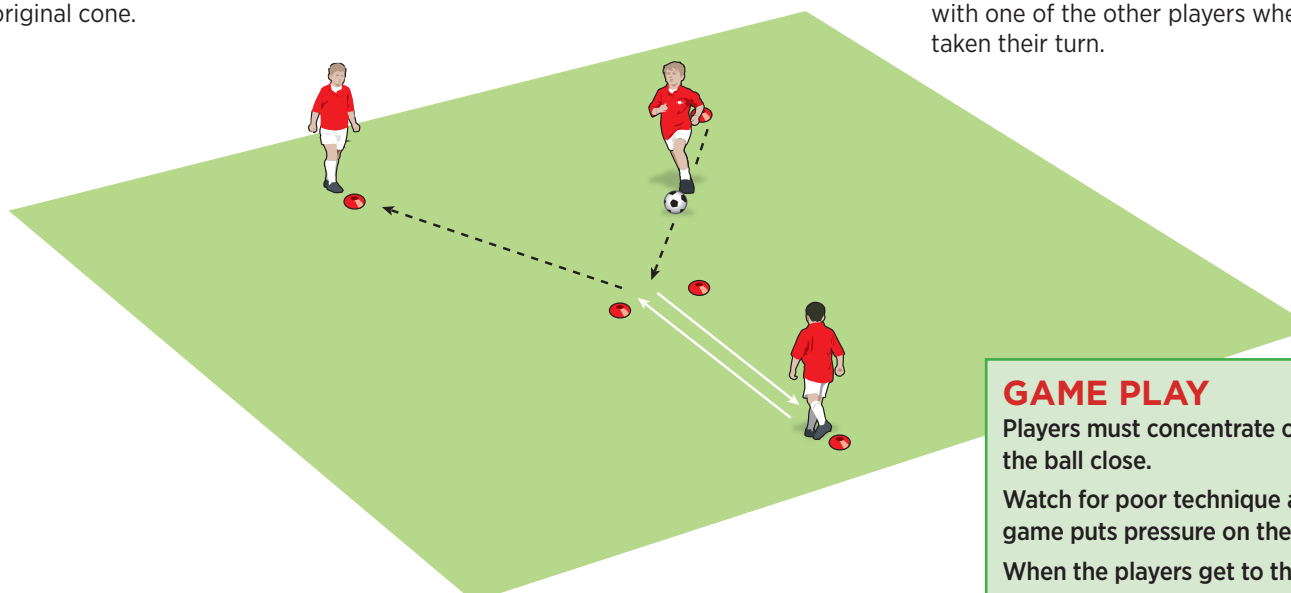
“Touch the ball to move forward” • “Stop the ball in the square with the sole of your foot” • “Pass to a team mate”

**1** Set up Y-shaped area with a cone on each point of the Y and a gate in the middle. The top arms of the Y should be 3 yards from the centre and the bottom of the Y should be 2 yards long.



**2** Players go in turn and dribble the ball for 3 yards to the centre gate. Here they should stop the ball with the sole of the foot then play a one-two with a team mate positioned at the bottom of the Y.

**3** On receiving the ball back, the working player dribbles to the far cone. When he gets there, he turns and repeats the process, returning to the original cone.



**4** Once you have run the players through this a couple of times, set up another Y area and race teams against each other. All three players must go, so rotate the server with one of the other players when they have taken their turn.

### GAME PLAY

Players must concentrate on keeping the ball close.

Watch for poor technique as the game puts pressure on the players.

When the players get to the gate they should be able to stop the ball then pass accurately.

### How many players do I need?

You need at least three players in each set up. Play as a game with two or more teams of three racing against other.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
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	--->	—>



# EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

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## U8

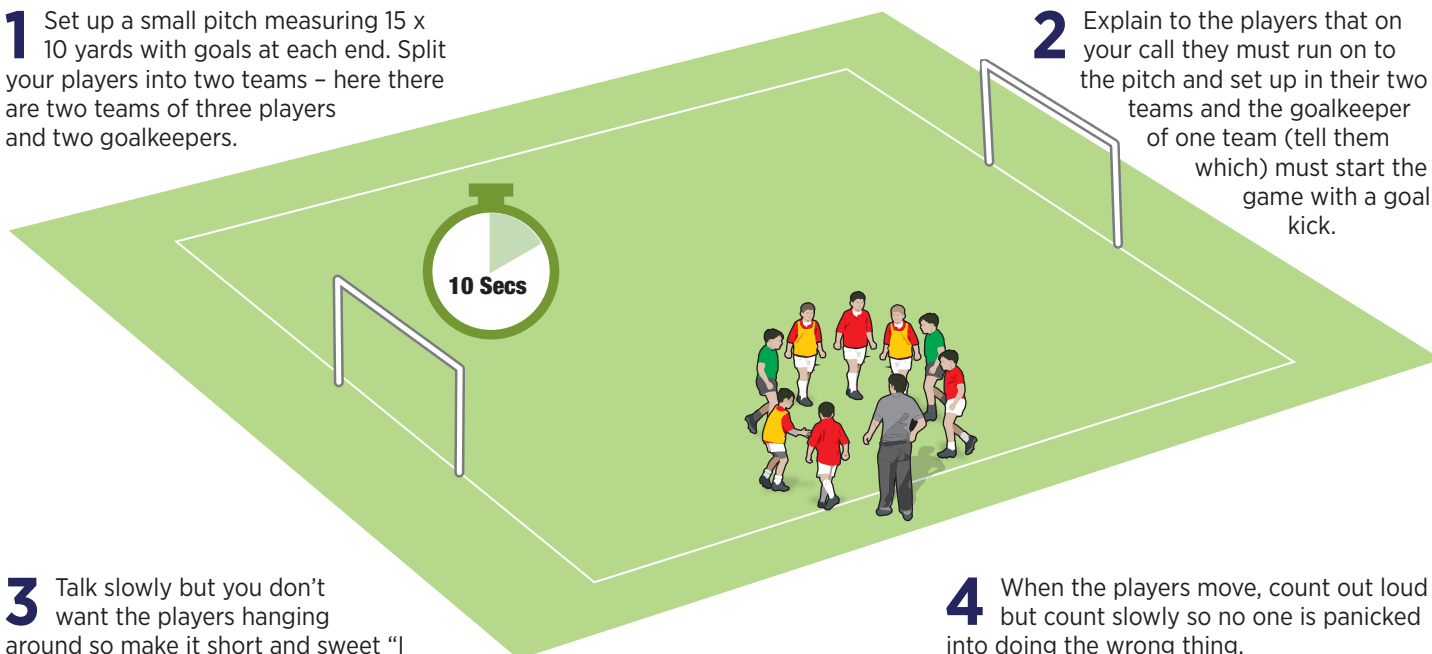
### ATTACKING

# Know the direction of play

**ACTIVITY: 10 SECONDS TO SET UP A GAME**

**CALL OUT** "Understand that to score the ball must go forward"

**1** Set up a small pitch measuring 15 x 10 yards with goals at each end. Split your players into two teams - here there are two teams of three players and two goalkeepers.



**2** Explain to the players that on your call they must run on to the pitch and set up in their two teams and the goalkeeper of one team (tell them which) must start the game with a goal kick.

**3** Talk slowly but you don't want the players hanging around so make it short and sweet "I have put you into two teams, a red and a yellow team. On my whistle you must go and set up with each team in one half of the pitch".

**4** When the players move, count out loud but count slowly so no one is panicked into doing the wrong thing.



**5** When you get close to the count of 10 call out to the goalkeeper you asked to start the game to make sure he has a ball.

**6** Once the game is under way, let them play for five minutes then repeat the exercise. You can progress it by saying they must pass twice before they can shoot at goal.

## How many players do I need?

We used eight players for this game but you just need to split your squad in half to play it.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

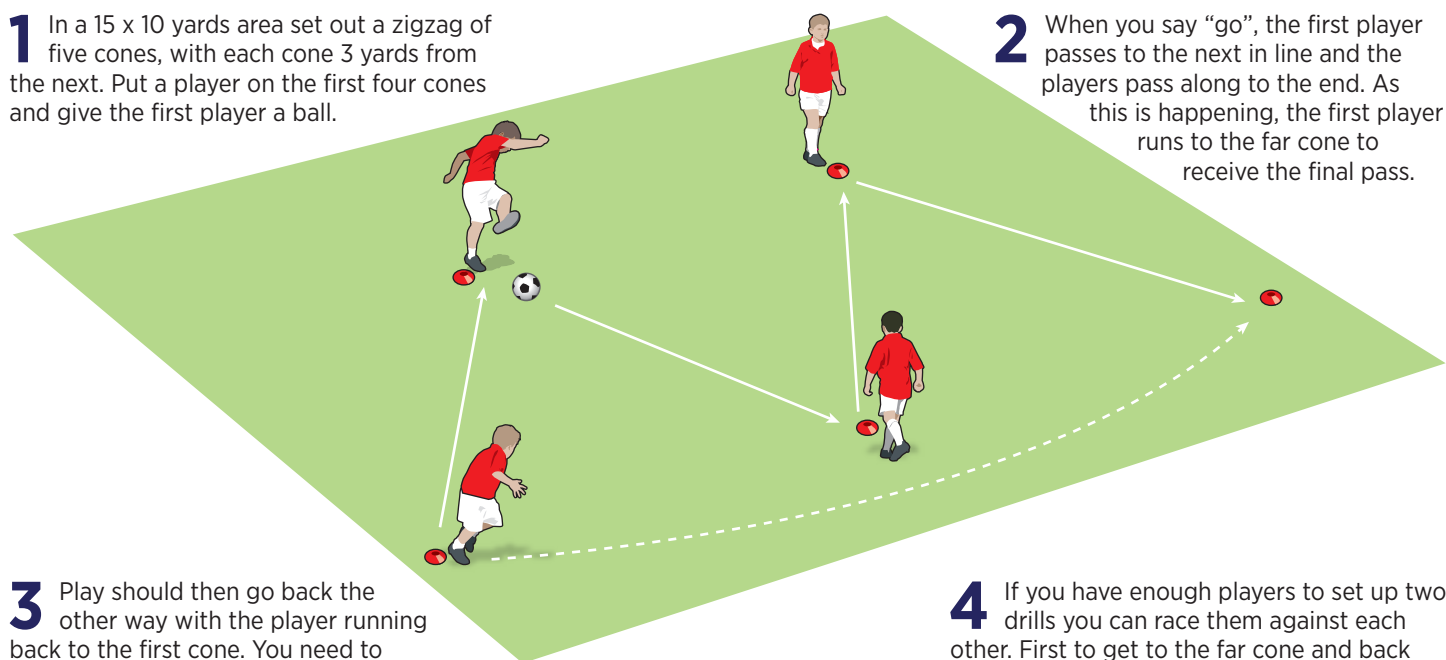


# Know the direction of play

## GAME: ZIGZAG PASSING

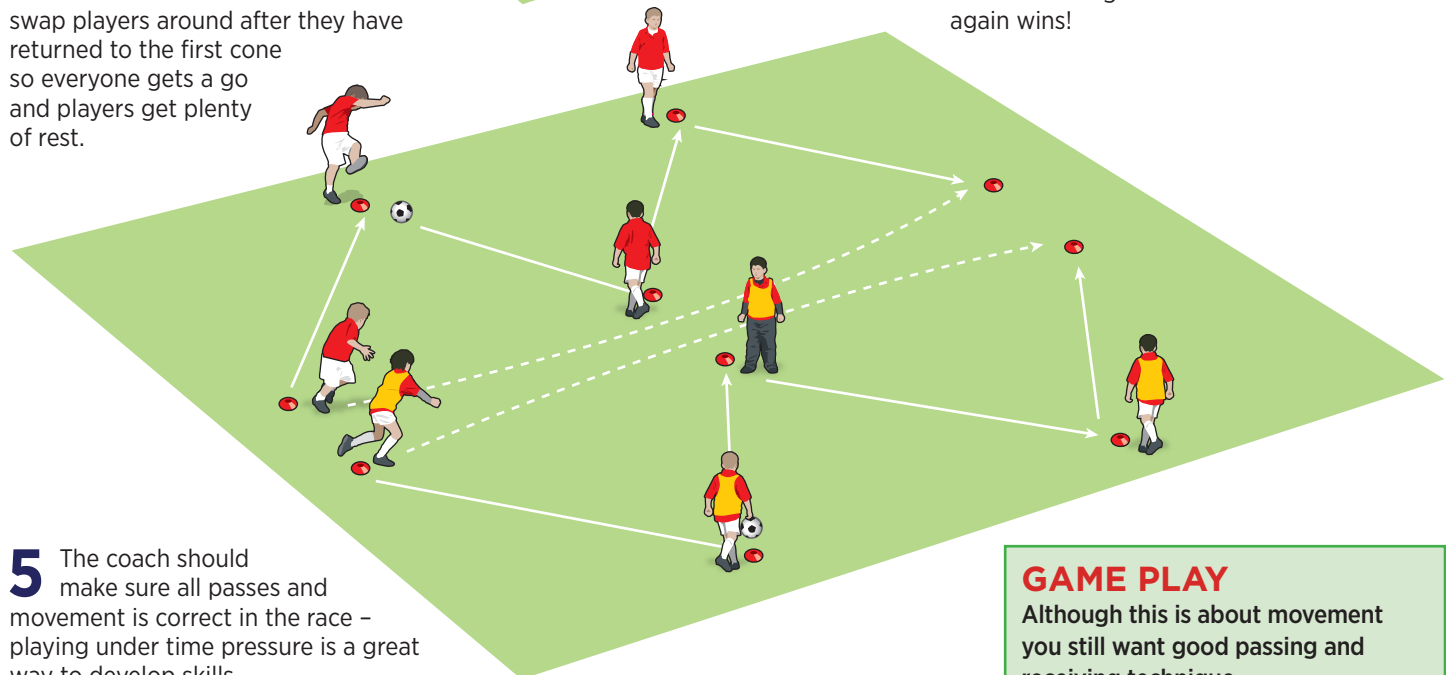
**CALL OUT** "Understand that to score the ball must go forward"

**1** In a 15 x 10 yards area set out a zigzag of five cones, with each cone 3 yards from the next. Put a player on the first four cones and give the first player a ball.



**2** When you say "go", the first player passes to the next in line and the players pass along to the end. As this is happening, the first player runs to the far cone to receive the final pass.

**3** Play should then go back the other way with the player running back to the first cone. You need to swap players around after they have returned to the first cone so everyone gets a go and players get plenty of rest.



**4** If you have enough players to set up two drills you can race them against each other. First to get to the far cone and back again wins!

**5** The coach should make sure all passes and movement is correct in the race – playing under time pressure is a great way to develop skills.

**GAME PLAY**  
Although this is about movement you still want good passing and receiving technique.  
Ask them why they are passing forward (to get to goal).  
Passing, dribbling and movement.

### How many players do I need?

This game uses four players in each set up. You can change the numbers of passers to suit your squad.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

# Dribble forward and shoot inside the penalty area

## ACTIVITY: DRIBBLE THROUGH THE GATE AND SHOOT

### CALL OUT

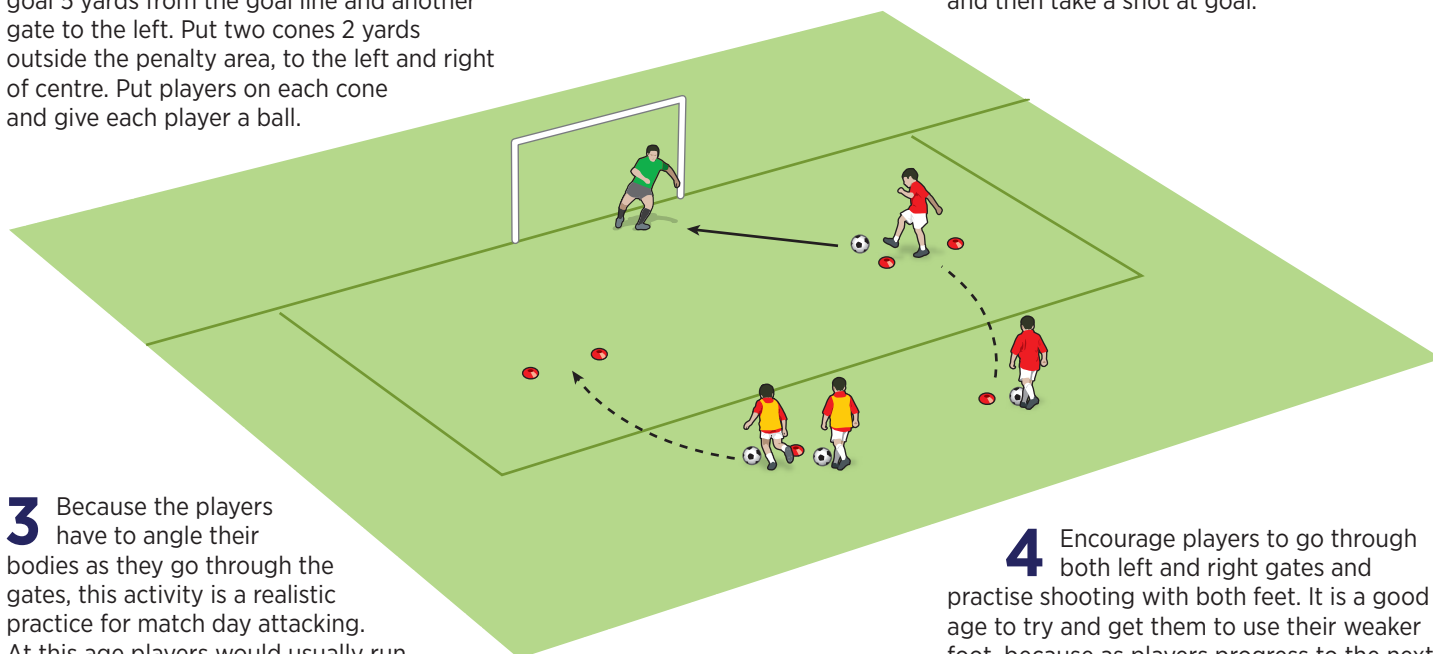
“Touch the ball three times when moving forward” • “Keep the ball close in front of you” • “Shoot for accuracy not power”

**1** Using the penalty area of your normal pitch, set up one gate to the right of the goal 5 yards from the goal line and another gate to the left. Put two cones 2 yards outside the penalty area, to the left and right of centre. Put players on each cone and give each player a ball.

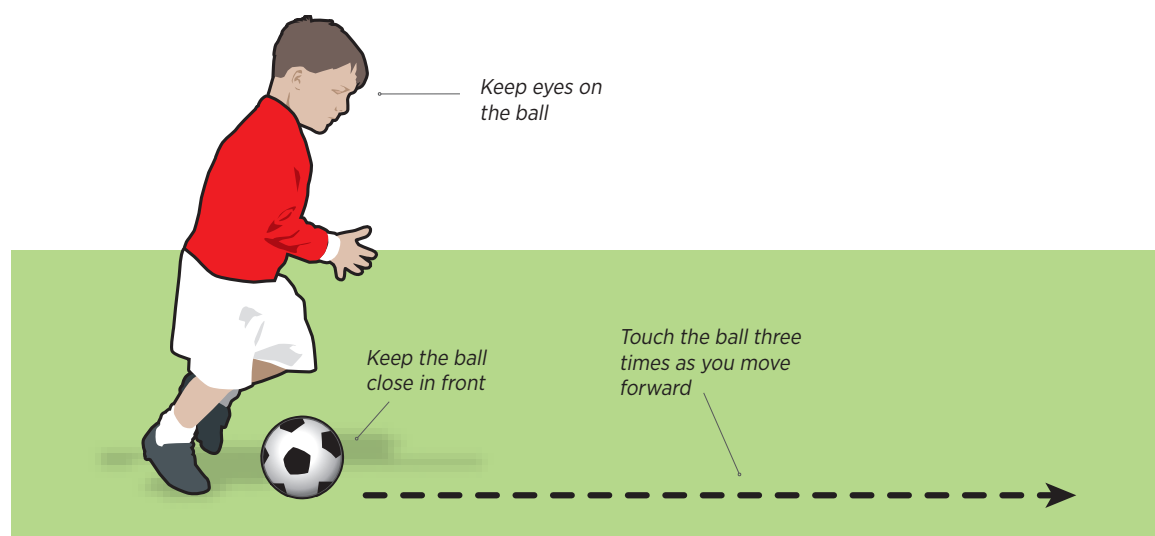
**2** When you say “go”, players take turns to dribble from the cone, through the gate and then take a shot at goal.

**3** Because the players have to angle their bodies as they go through the gates, this activity is a realistic practice for match day attacking. At this age players would usually run straight into the penalty area. What we are trying to do here is to get the players used to running into areas around the penalty area.

**4** Encourage players to go through both left and right gates and practise shooting with both feet. It is a good age to try and get them to use their weaker foot, because as players progress to the next age group they will be more likely to want to use both feet.



## Dribbling the ball



### How many players do I need?

We used four players, so players dribble and shoot then get a short rest, but you can use more if necessary.

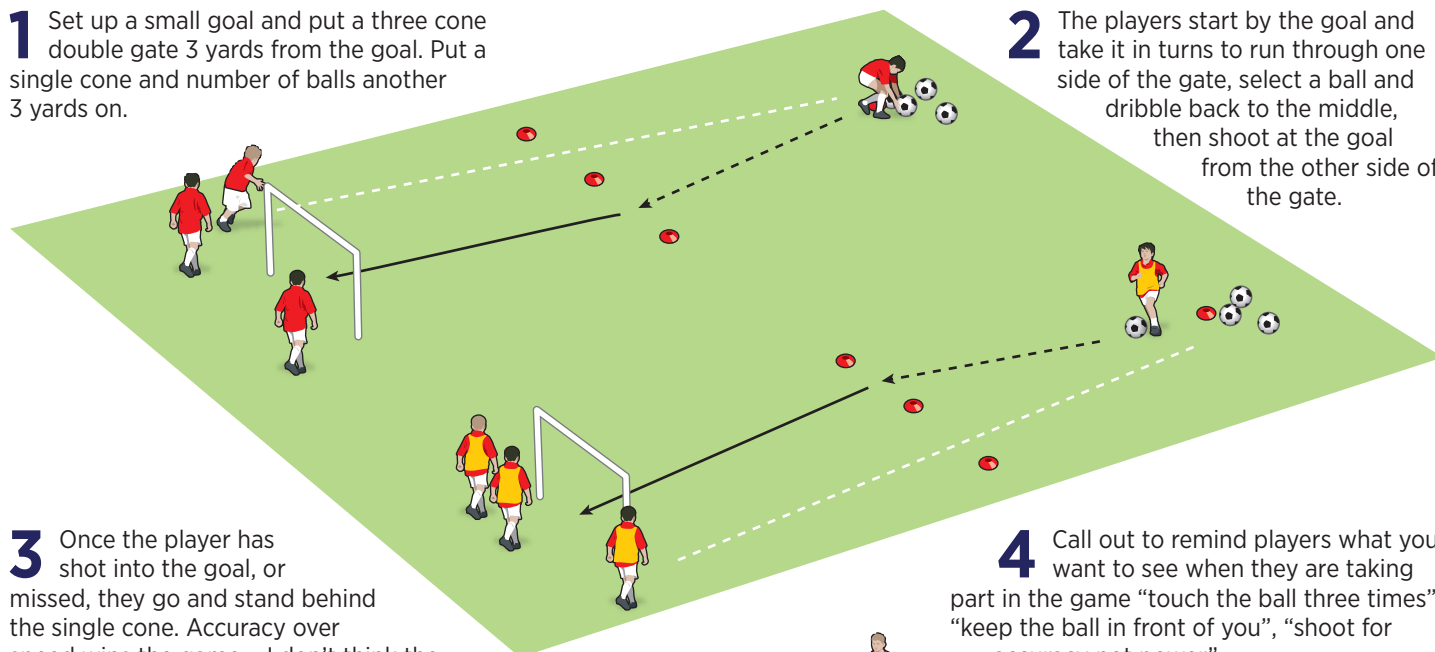
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

# Dribble forward and shoot inside the penalty area

**GAME: RUN, DRIBBLE, SHOOT**

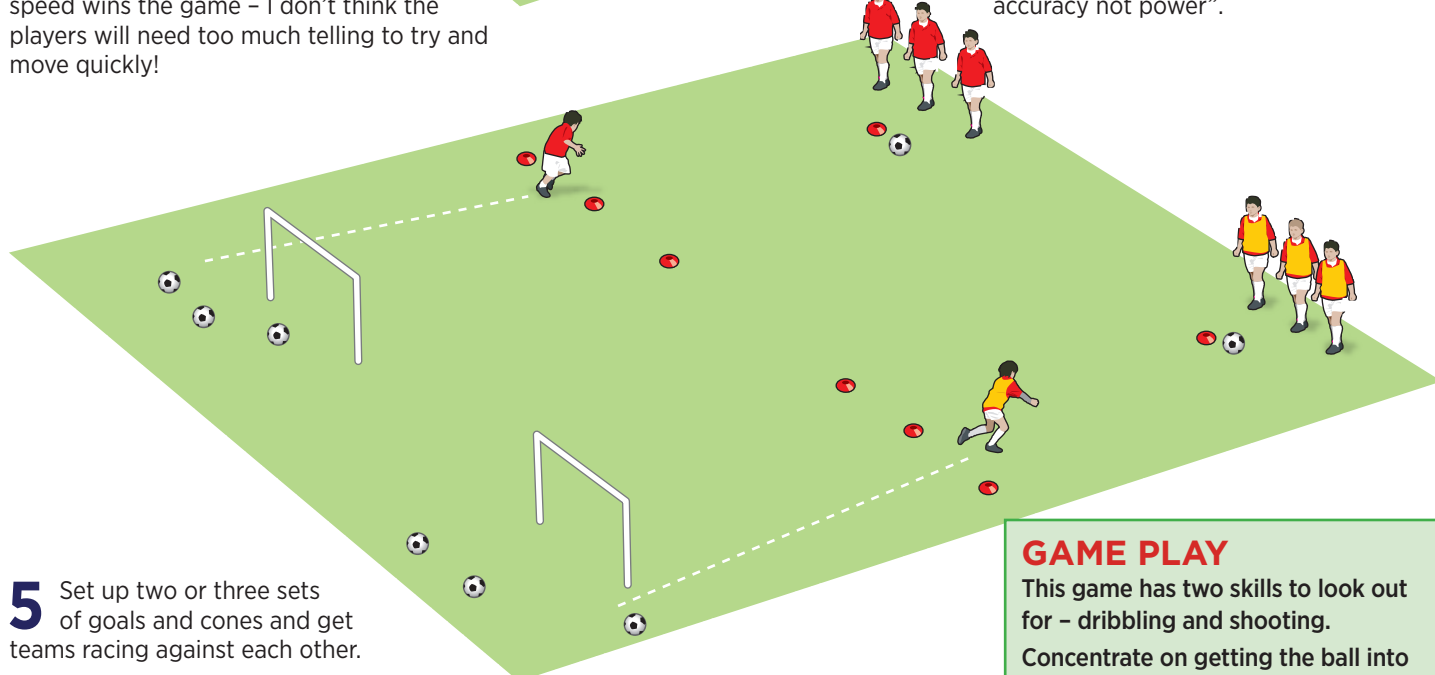
**CALL OUT** "Touch the ball three times when moving forward" • "Keep the ball close in front of you" • "Shoot for accuracy not power"

**1** Set up a small goal and put a three cone double gate 3 yards from the goal. Put a single cone and number of balls another 3 yards on.



**2** The players start by the goal and take it in turns to run through one side of the gate, select a ball and dribble back to the middle, then shoot at the goal from the other side of the gate.

**3** Once the player has shot into the goal, or missed, they go and stand behind the single cone. Accuracy over speed wins the game – I don't think the players will need too much telling to try and move quickly!



**4** Call out to remind players what you want to see when they are taking part in the game "touch the ball three times", "keep the ball in front of you", "shoot for accuracy not power".

**5** Set up two or three sets of goals and cones and get teams racing against each other.

**GAME PLAY**  
This game has two skills to look out for – dribbling and shooting. Concentrate on getting the ball into the goal. Keep an eye out on the players who do everything correctly and those who will win at all costs.

## How many players do I need?

You need to split your players into teams of two to four, so they can race against each other.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

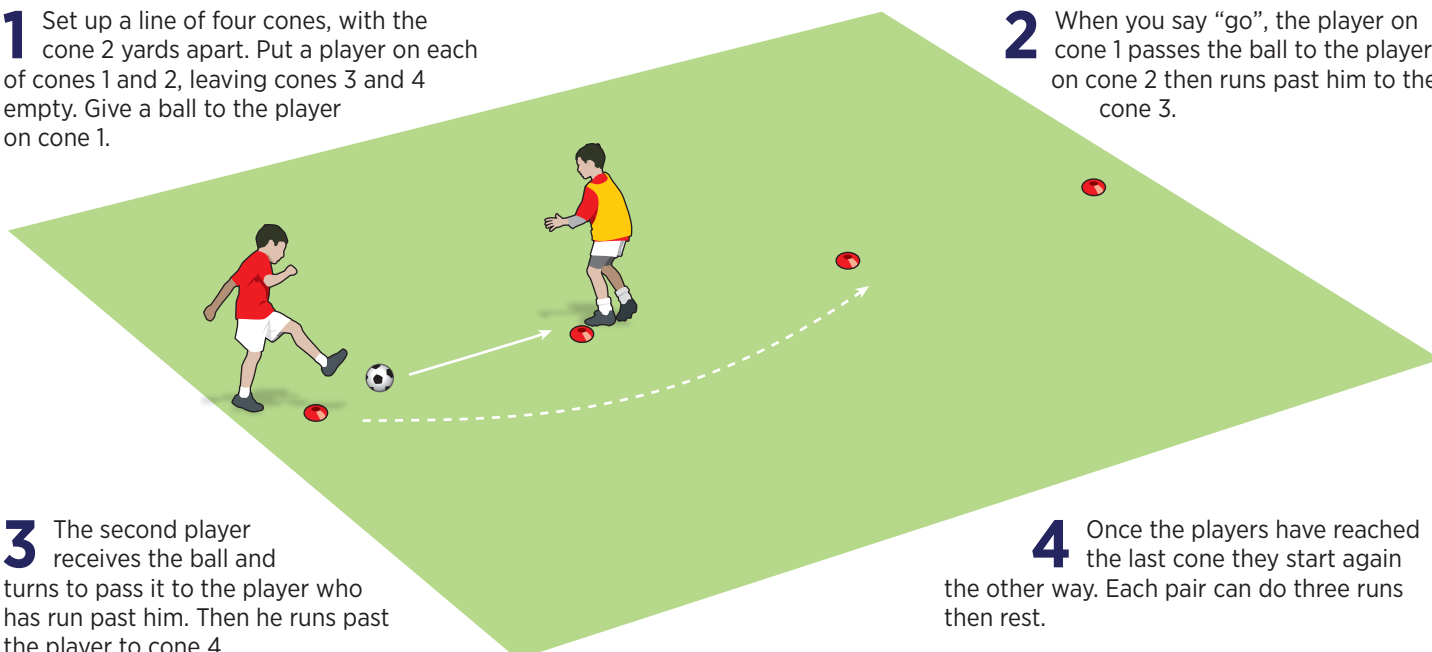
## Pass 2 yards to a team mate and run past him

**ACTIVITY: OPEN TO THE PASS**

### CALL OUT

“Look where the pass is going” • “Use the inside of the foot” • “Run past the receiver” • “Lend the ball to your team mate”

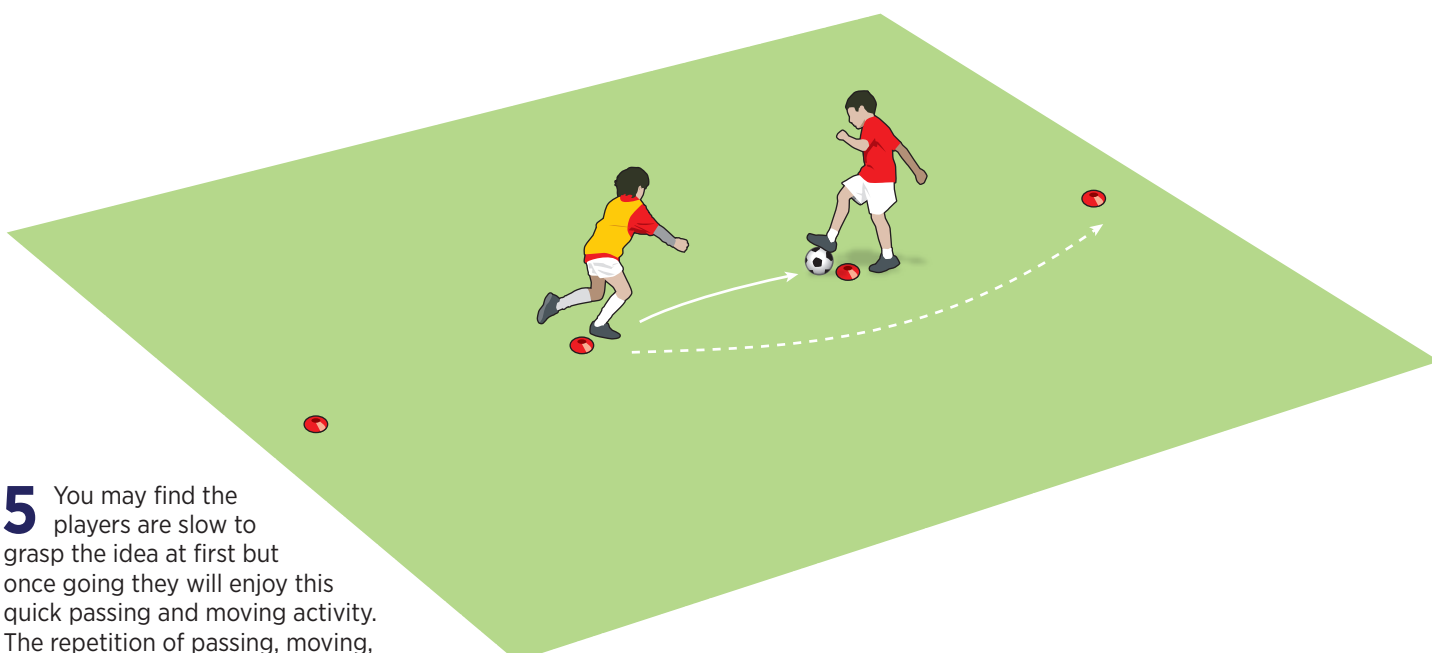
**1** Set up a line of four cones, with the cone 2 yards apart. Put a player on each of cones 1 and 2, leaving cones 3 and 4 empty. Give a ball to the player on cone 1.



**2** When you say “go”, the player on cone 1 passes the ball to the player on cone 2 then runs past him to the cone 3.

**3** The second player receives the ball and turns to pass it to the player who has run past him. Then he runs past the player to cone 4.

**4** Once the players have reached the last cone they start again the other way. Each pair can do three runs then rest.



**5** You may find the players are slow to grasp the idea at first but once going they will enjoy this quick passing and moving activity. The repetition of passing, moving, turning and receiving is ideal for them at this age and you can use it as a warm-up for games.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement

# Pass 2 yards to a team mate and run past him

**GAME: ONE TWO GOAL!**

## CALL OUT

“Look where the pass is going” • “Use the inside of the foot” • “Run past the receiver” • “Lend the ball to your team mate”

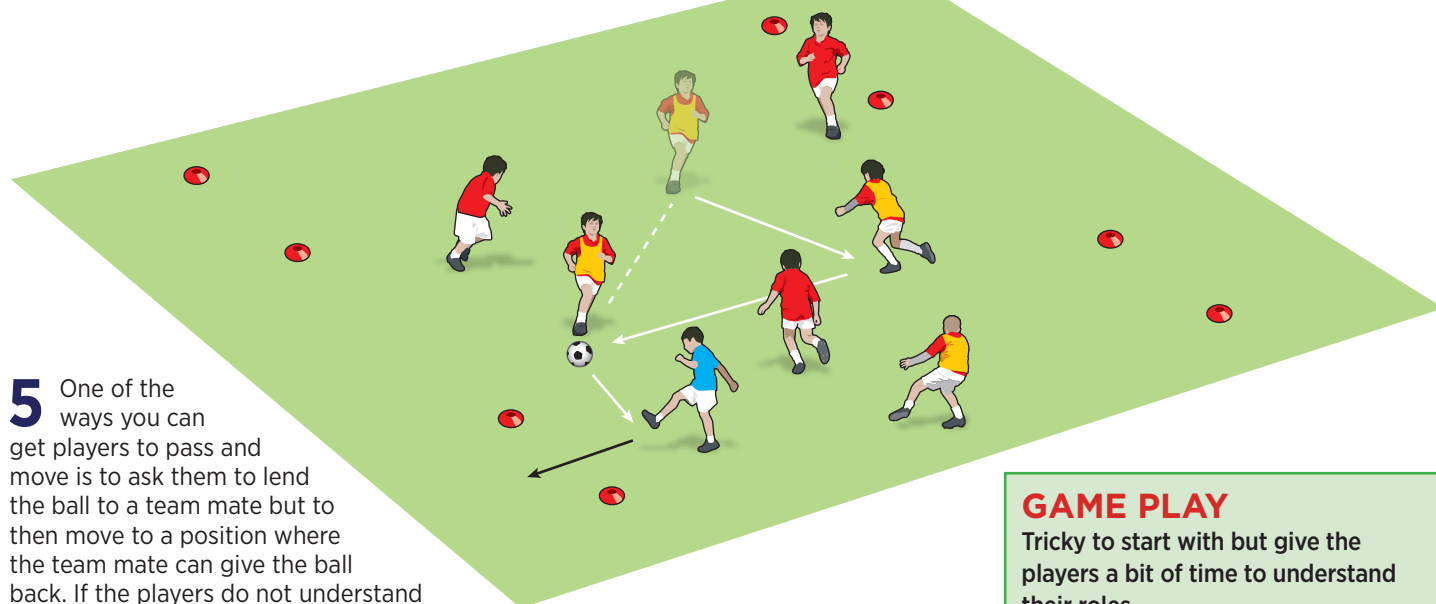
**1** Set up a 12 x 12 yards area with corner goals made from cones 2 yards wide. Split your players into two teams of three players and one neutral player in a different coloured bib or shirt.



**2** Play a normal game with the teams able to score into either of their opponents' goals. Give praise when a player tries a one-two even if it doesn't come off – the idea is to get players to pass, move and receive the ball back.

**3** The neutral player adds overloads to the game. Make sure you explain the role of this player who is on the side of the team with the ball. He never tackles or blocks but he can score.

**4** Having two goals encourages players to pass and move across the pitch, instead of going straight up and down.



**5** One of the ways you can get players to pass and move is to ask them to lend the ball to a team mate but to then move to a position where the team mate can give the ball back. If the players do not understand the game, show them what you mean by getting them to do it with the ball in their hands.

## GAME PLAY

Tricky to start with but give the players a bit of time to understand their roles.

Passing and receiving technique.  
Dribbling with the ball and scoring goals.

## How many players do I need?

Play this as a 3v3 game with a neutral player making seven players in total.

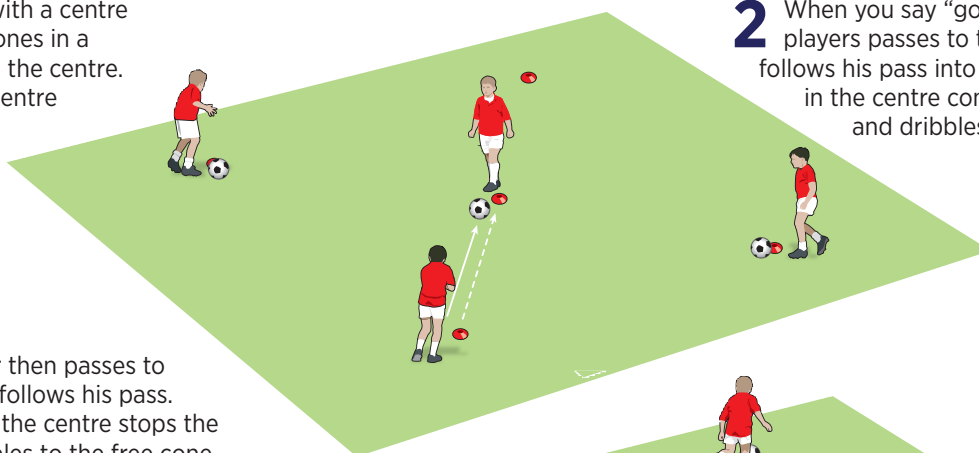
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
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# Make a 3 yard pass and follow the ball

## ACTIVITY: KING OF THE SQUARE

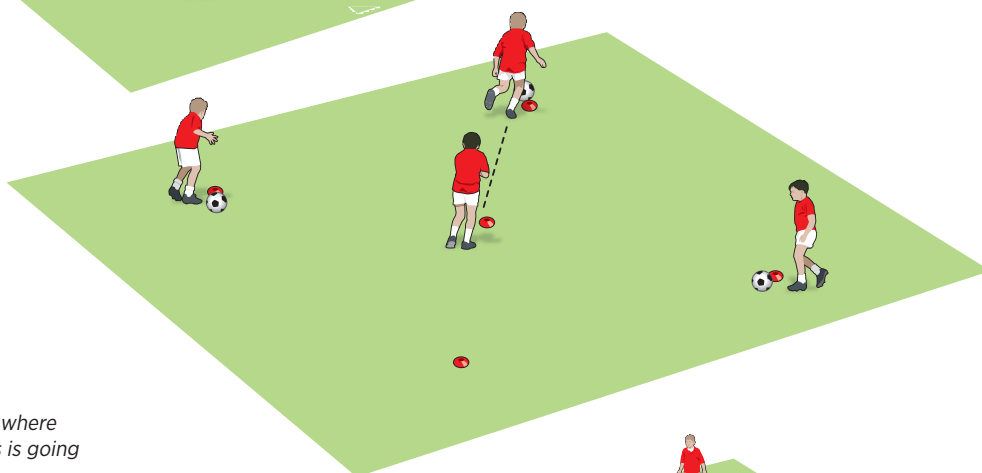
**CALL OUT** "Use the inside of the foot" • "Look to where the ball is going" • "Run after the ball"

**1** Set up an area with a centre cone and four cones in a square 3 yards from the centre. Put a player in the centre and players, with balls, on three of the outer cones.



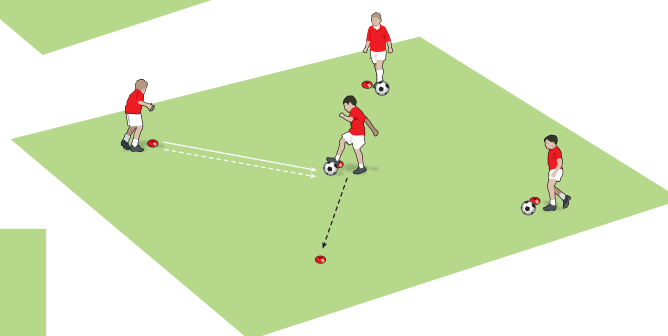
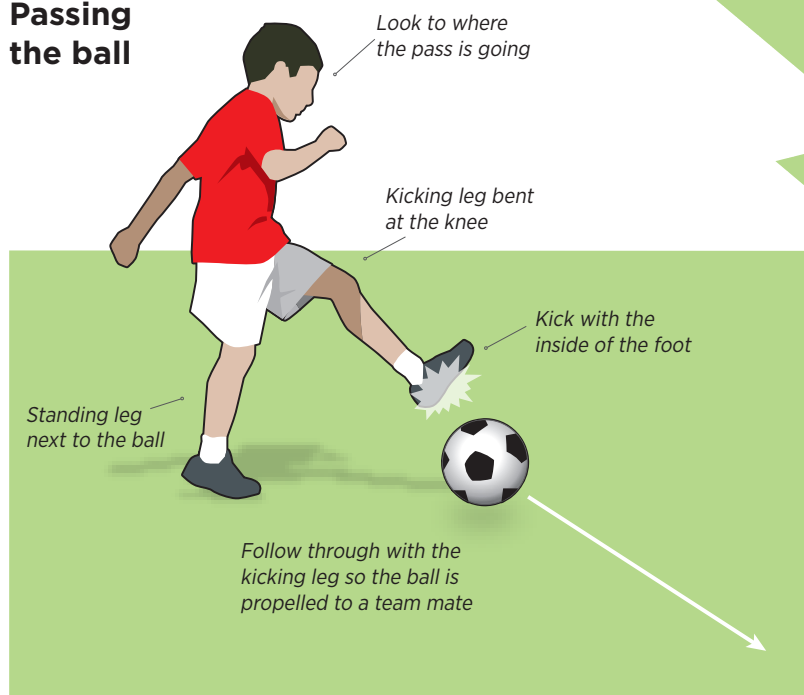
**2** When you say "go", one of the outer players passes to the centre player then follows his pass into the centre. The player in the centre controls the ball, turns and dribbles to the free cone.

**3** The next player then passes to the centre and follows his pass. Again, the player in the centre stops the ball, turns and dribbles to the free cone.



**4** As players have to turn to go to the free cone, this makes control of the ball that little bit harder.

### Passing the ball



**5** Players take it in turns to pass and dribble. Try to get the players to speed it up by timing the move and then asking the other players to beat that time.

### How many players do I need?

We used four players in the activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)

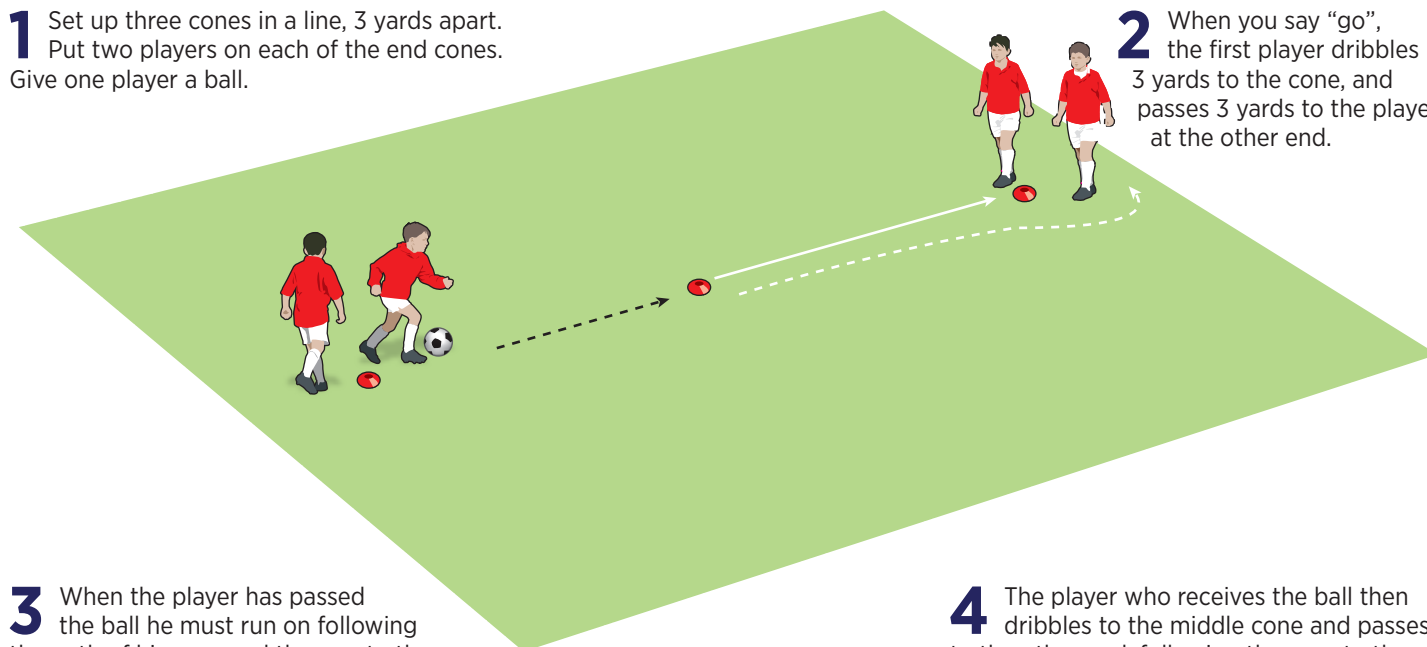
# Make a 3 yard pass and follow the ball

**GAME: CROSS PASSING**

**CALL OUT** "Use the inside of the foot" • "Look to where the ball is going" • "Run after the ball"

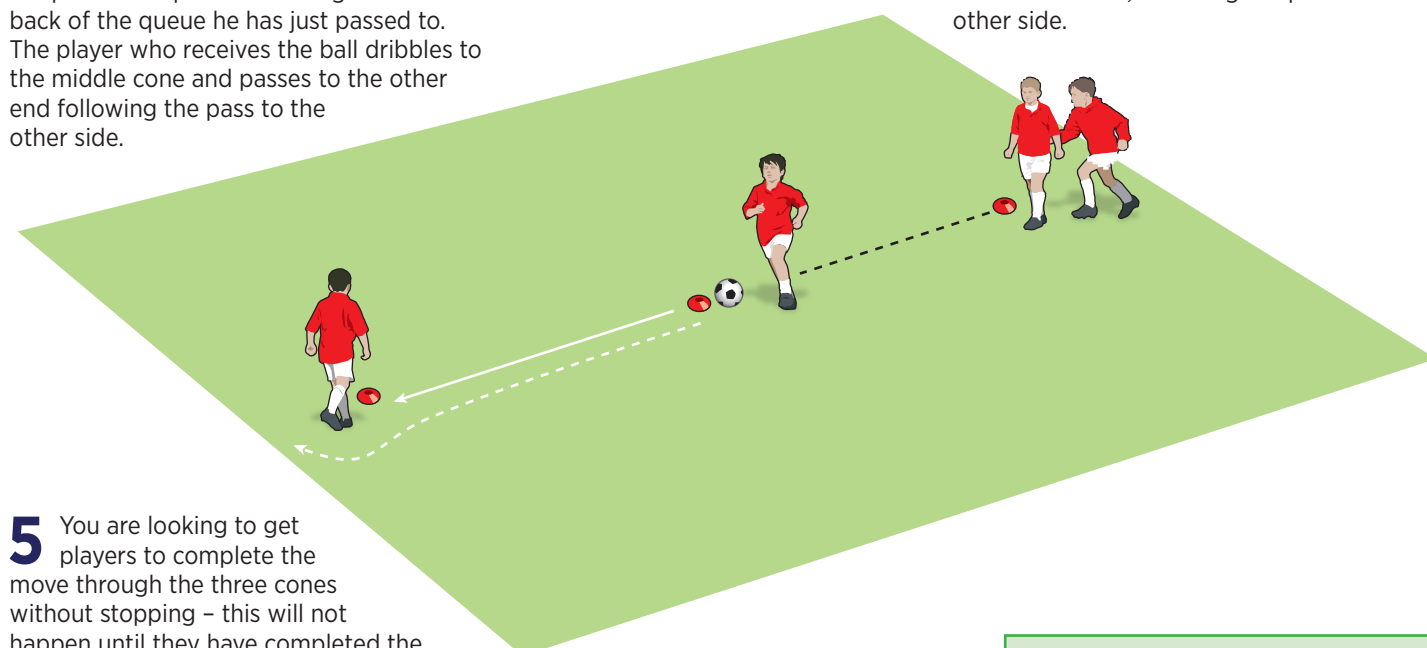
**1** Set up three cones in a line, 3 yards apart. Put two players on each of the end cones. Give one player a ball.

**2** When you say "go", the first player dribbles 3 yards to the cone, and passes 3 yards to the player at the other end.



**3** When the player has passed the ball he must run on following the path of his pass and then go to the back of the queue he has just passed to. The player who receives the ball dribbles to the middle cone and passes to the other end following the pass to the other side.

**4** The player who receives the ball then dribbles to the middle cone and passes to the other end, following the pass to the other side.



**5** You are looking to get players to complete the move through the three cones without stopping – this will not happen until they have completed the session two or three times and it may be useful to walk them through it first.

### GAME PLAY

Player concentration is important.  
Passing and receiving technique.  
Movement after passing the ball.

### How many players do I need?

We worked in groups of four players for this one but you can use any number of players between two and six in each set up.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

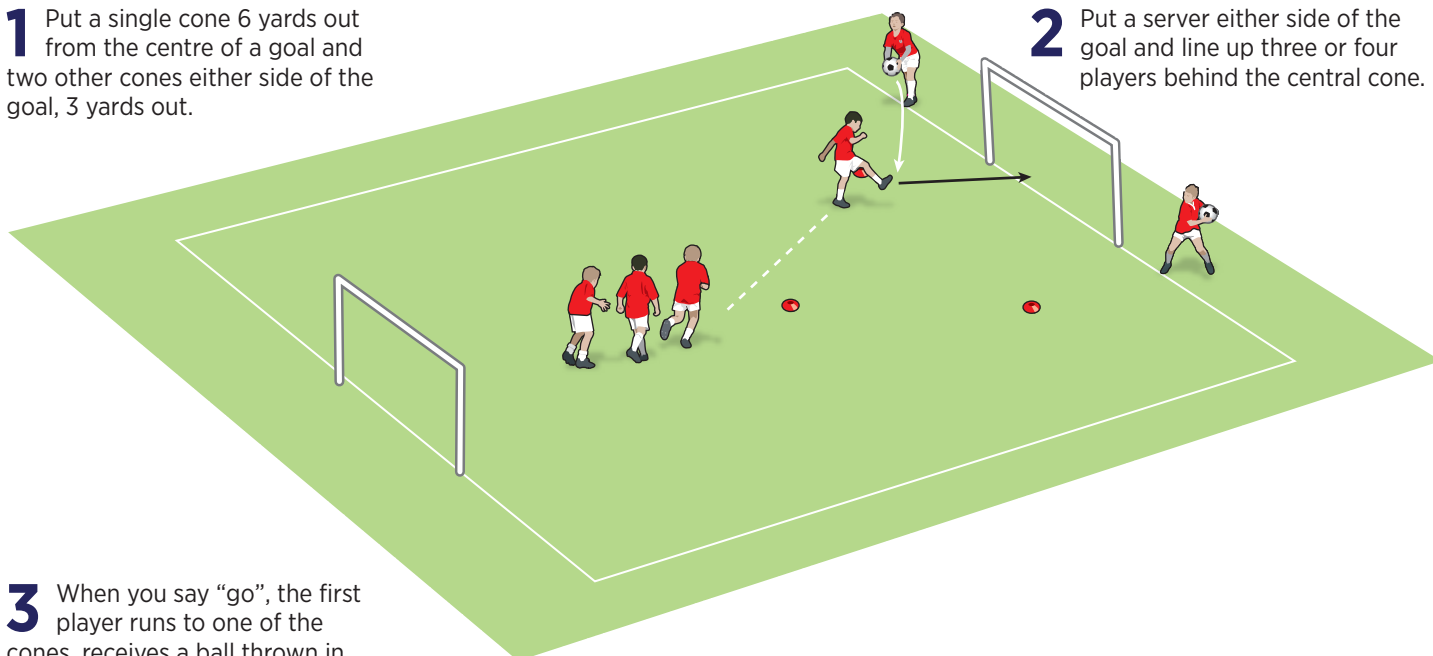
# Score a goal

## ACTIVITY: KING OF THE SQUARE

### CALL OUT

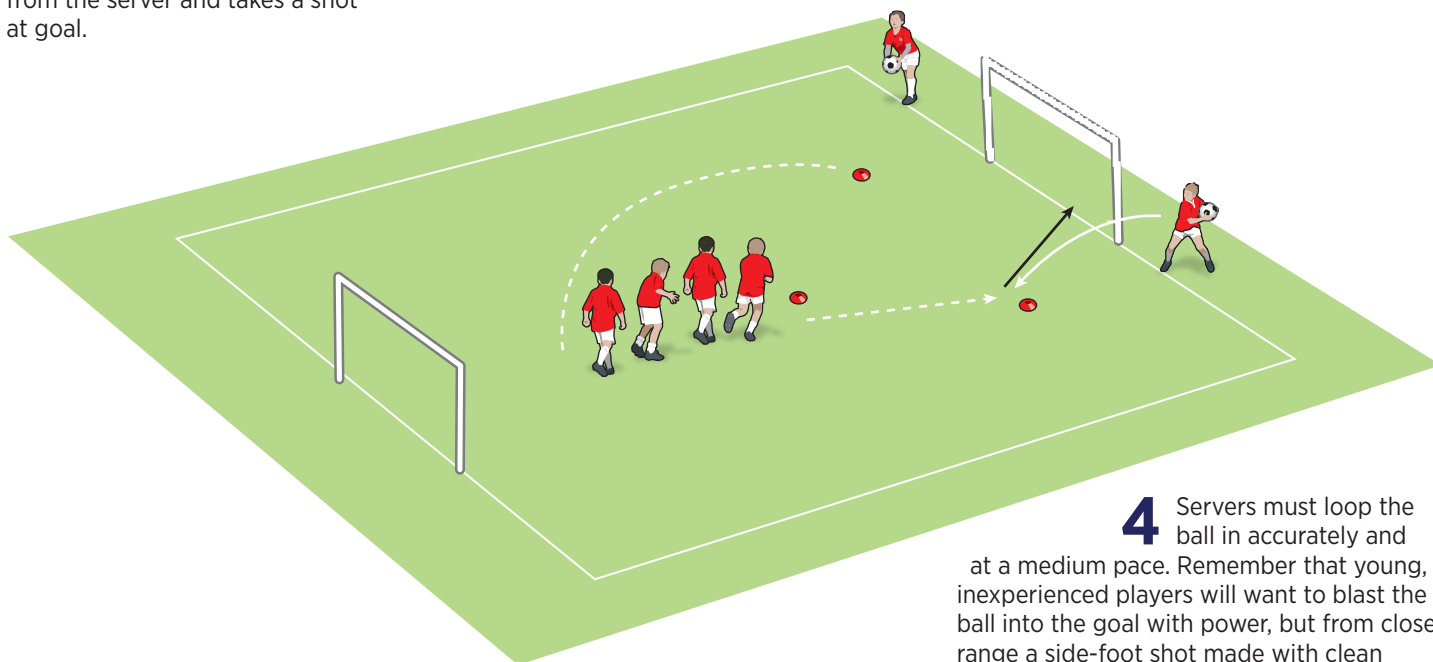
“Look up to see the goal” • “Look at the position of the goalkeeper” • “Kick the ball into the goal”

**1** Put a single cone 6 yards out from the centre of a goal and two other cones either side of the goal, 3 yards out.



**2** Put a server either side of the goal and line up three or four players behind the central cone.

**3** When you say “go”, the first player runs to one of the cones, receives a ball thrown in from the server and takes a shot at goal.



**4** Servers must loop the ball in accurately and at a medium pace. Remember that young, inexperienced players will want to blast the ball into the goal with power, but from close range a side-foot shot made with clean contact and is usually enough to score.

### How many players do I need?

We used six players in the activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot



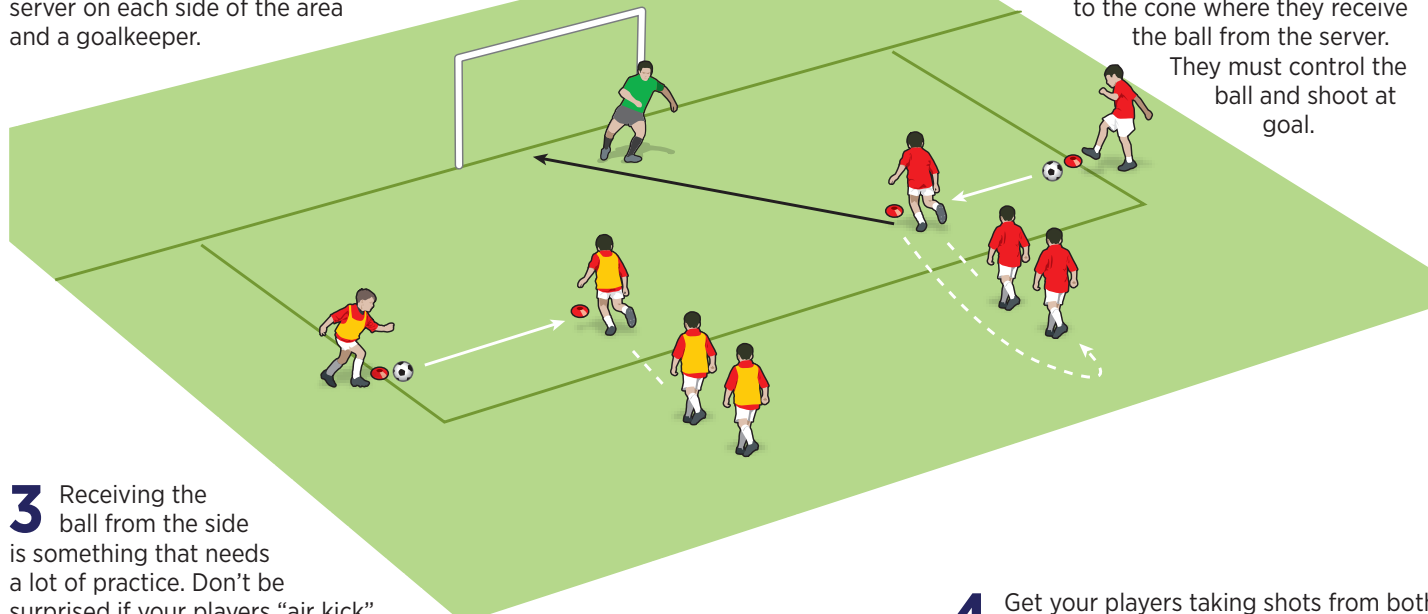
# Score a goal

**GAME: HALF TURN AND SCORE**

**CALL OUT** "Look up to see the goal" • "Look at the position of the goalkeeper" • "Kick the ball into the goal away from the goalkeeper"

**1** Use the penalty area of your usual pitch. Put a cone to each side of the goal about 5 yards from the goal line. You need a server on each side of the area and a goalkeeper.

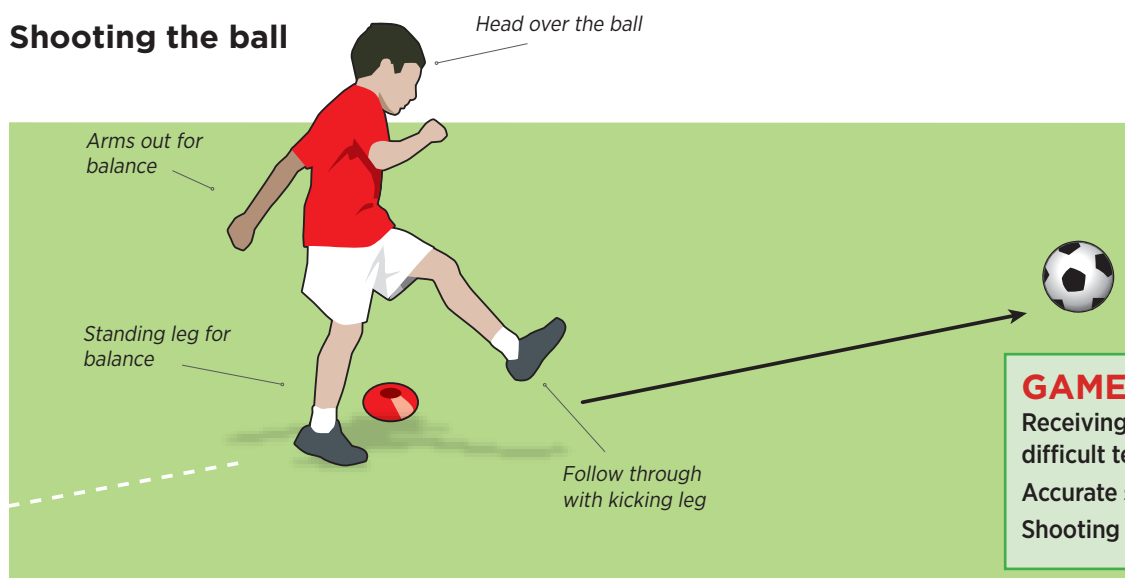
**2** Line players up outside the area opposite the cones. When you say "go", the players take turns to run in to the cone where they receive the ball from the server. They must control the ball and shoot at goal.



**3** Receiving the ball from the side is something that needs a lot of practice. Don't be surprised if your players "air kick" and miss the ball completely. The aim is to eventually get the players to shoot first time in this area of the pitch but allow a controlling touch to help them with their aim.

**4** Get your players taking shots from both sides with both feet. It is a good idea to get them kicking the ball with both feet at this early age. You can call out to the players to get them to use the foot nearest the ball each time.

## Shooting the ball



**GAME PLAY**  
Receiving the ball to shoot is a difficult technique. Accurate shots better than power. Shooting technique vital to success.

### How many players do I need?

We worked with eight players and a goalkeeper but this can be played with any number of players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	- - - - ->	->
	Run with the ball	Shot
	- - - - ->	->



# EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

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## U8

## DEFENDING

# Retreat to a defensive position when your side loses the ball

**ACTIVITY: WHERE SHOULD THE DEFENDERS BE?**

**CALL OUT** "Get between the ball and your own goal" • "Don't stand near other defenders"

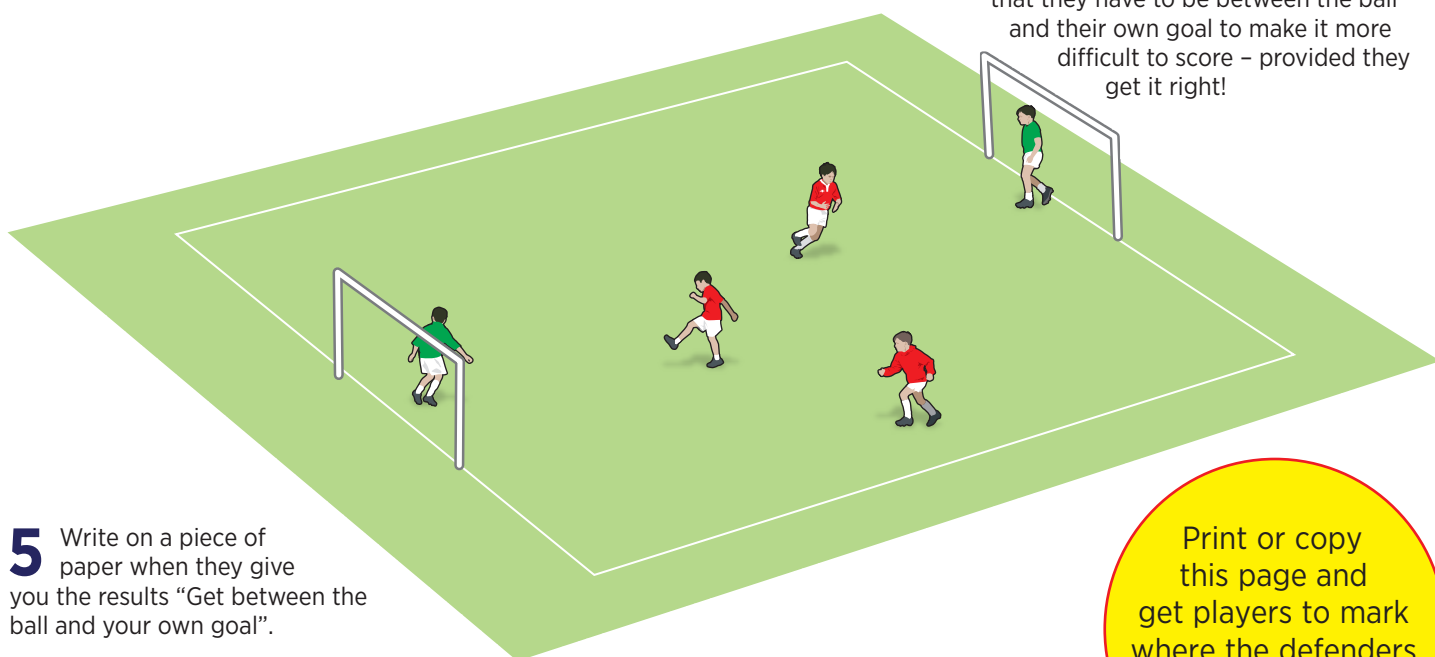
**1** Gather your players around you as if you are giving a team talk and give everyone print-outs of this page.

**2** Speak to the players about where the defenders are. In the first diagram, mention how far they are away from any of the attacking players.



**3** Highlight the free attacker in front of goal who hasn't got anyone blocking his route to goal.

**4** Get your players to mark where the defenders should be in the second box. This will help cement in their minds that they have to be between the ball and their own goal to make it more difficult to score - provided they get it right!



**5** Write on a piece of paper when they give you the results "Get between the ball and your own goal".

Print or copy this page and get players to mark where the defenders should be on the second diagram.

## How many players do I need?

All your players work on this - you can do it in pairs.

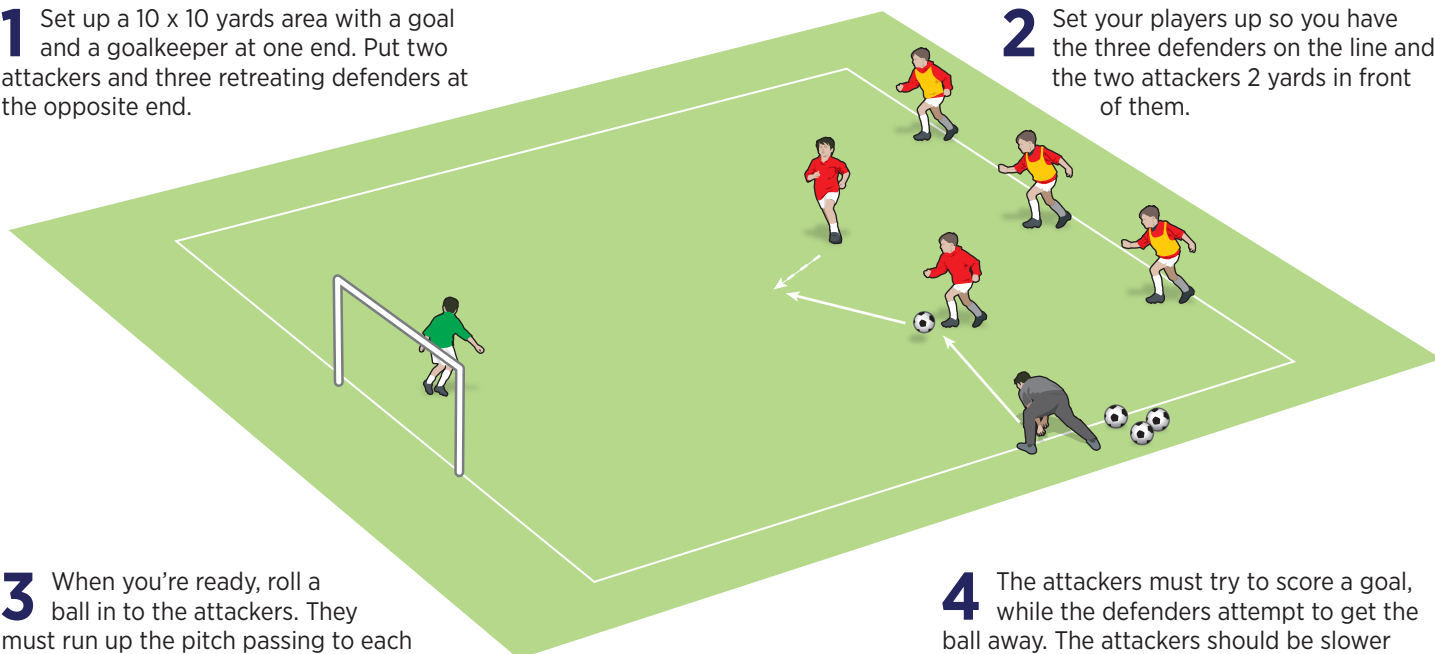
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

# Retreat to a defensive position when your side loses the ball

**GAME: GET BACK!**

**CALL OUT** "Get between the ball and your own goal" • "Don't stand near other defenders"

**1** Set up a 10 x 10 yards area with a goal and a goalkeeper at one end. Put two attackers and three retreating defenders at the opposite end.



**2** Set your players up so you have the three defenders on the line and the two attackers 2 yards in front of them.

**3** When you're ready, roll a ball in to the attackers. They must run up the pitch passing to each other as they go. At the same time, the defenders must sprint up the pitch and position themselves between the attackers and the goal.



**4** The attackers must try to score a goal, while the defenders attempt to get the ball away. The attackers should be slower because they have to pass the ball, which will give the defenders a chance to get back.

**5** Run through the game three times then switch a couple of the defenders with the attackers so everyone has a go at getting back.

### GAME PLAY

Don't let the defenders to give up.  
Watch for reaction to rebounds.  
Praise determined recovery moves.

### How many players do I need?

We used six players in the game with two attackers, three retreating defenders and a goalkeeper.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	--->
	Run with the ball	Shot
	--->	--->

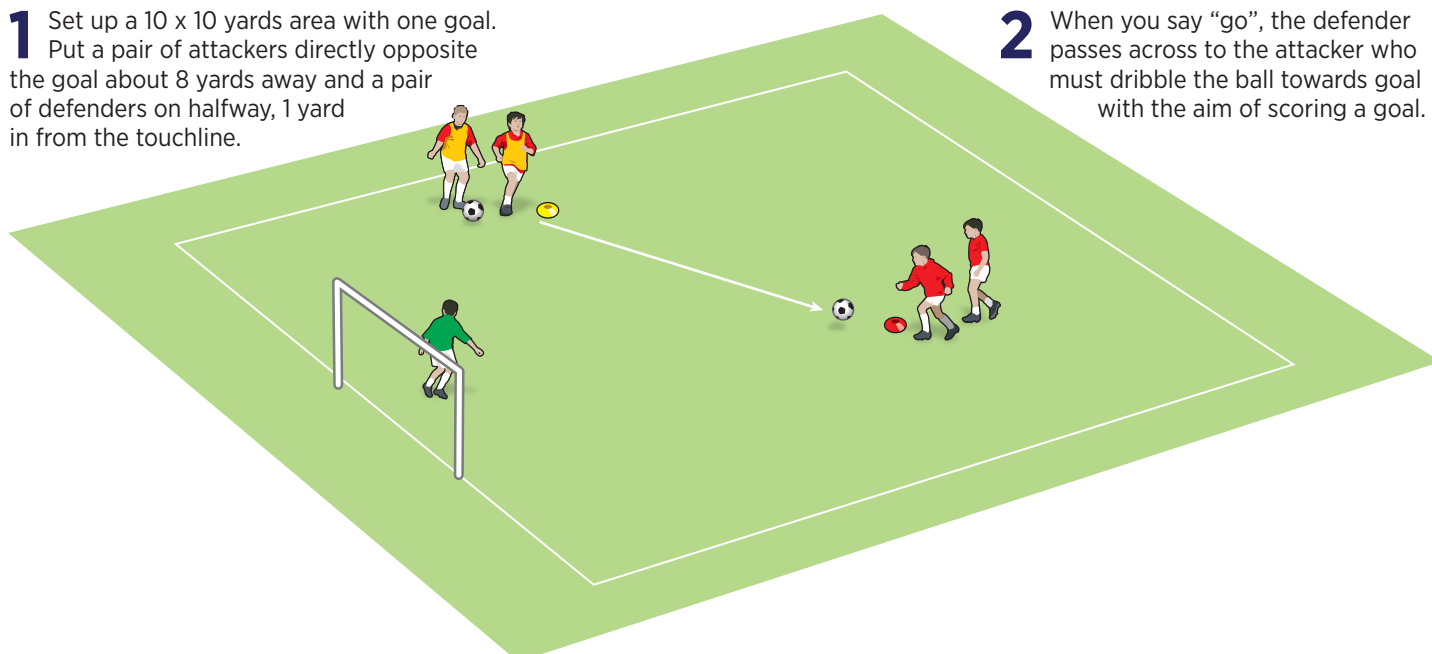
## Pressing the player with the ball

### ACTIVITY: PASS AND PRESS

#### CALL OUT

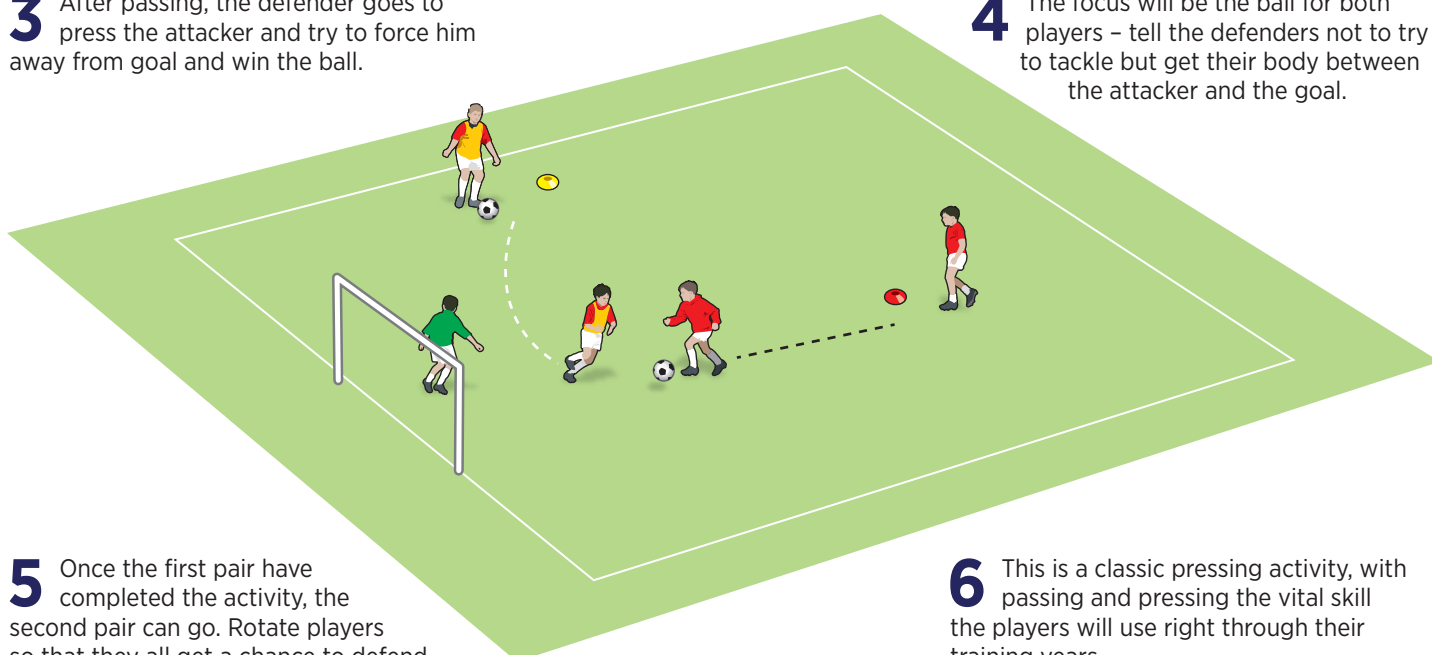
“Run towards the player with the ball” • “Try to get the ball” • “Stay between the ball and your goal”

- 1** Set up a 10 x 10 yards area with one goal. Put a pair of attackers directly opposite the goal about 8 yards away and a pair of defenders on halfway, 1 yard in from the touchline.



- 2** When you say “go”, the defender passes across to the attacker who must dribble the ball towards goal with the aim of scoring a goal.

- 3** After passing, the defender goes to press the attacker and try to force him away from goal and win the ball.



- 4** The focus will be the ball for both players – tell the defenders not to try to tackle but get their body between the attacker and the goal.

- 5** Once the first pair have completed the activity, the second pair can go. Rotate players so that they all get a chance to defend and attack.

- 6** This is a classic pressing activity, with passing and pressing the vital skill the players will use right through their training years.

#### How many players do I need?

We used five players for this activity – two attackers, two defenders and a goalkeeper – but you can line up more players behind each cone.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)
	→ (dashed line)	→ (solid line)

U8 | DEFENDING 2

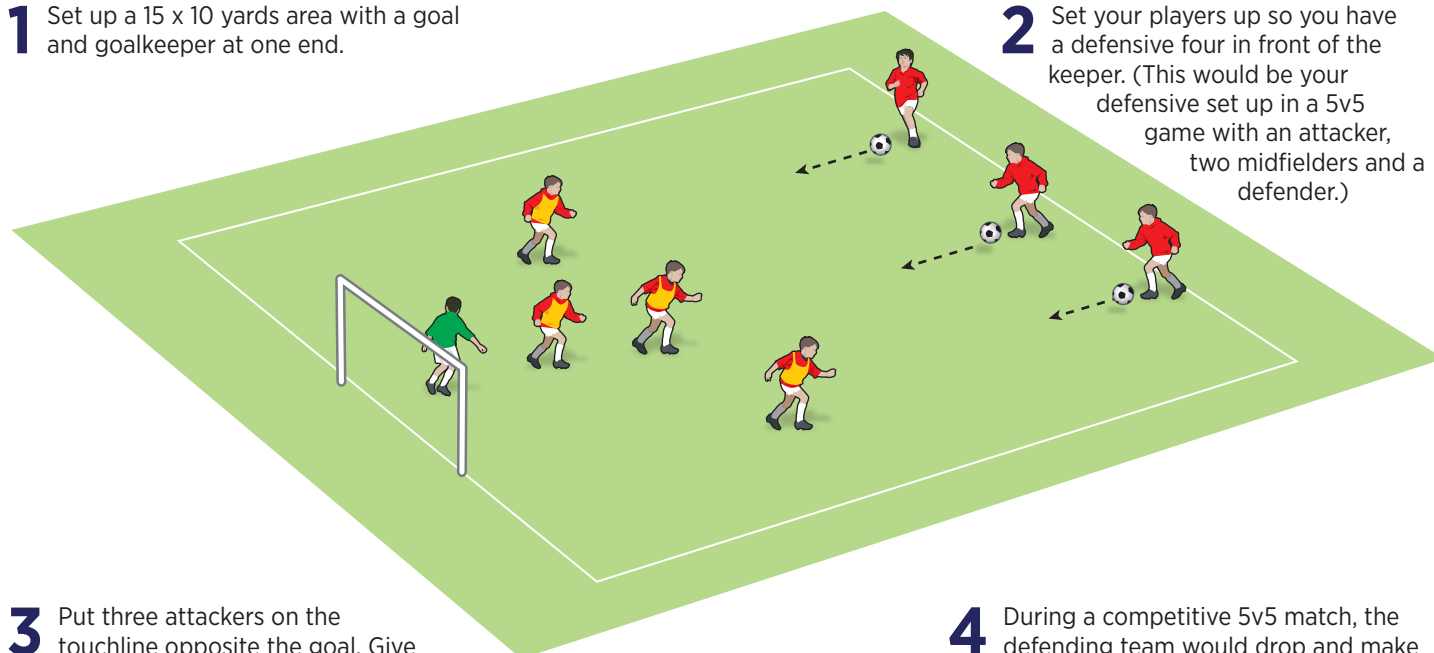
## Pressing the player with the ball

**GAME: DEFENSIVE FORMATION**

### CALL OUT

“Run towards the player with the ball” • “Try to get the ball” • “Stay between the ball and your goal”

**1** Set up a 15 x 10 yards area with a goal and goalkeeper at one end.



**2** Set your players up so you have a defensive four in front of the keeper. (This would be your defensive set up in a 5v5 game with an attacker, two midfielders and a defender.)

**3** Put three attackers on the touchline opposite the goal. Give each of the three attackers a ball and get them to start at the far end and attack the formation – you can get them to go all at once or one at a time.



**4** During a competitive 5v5 match, the defending team would drop and make this kind of formation to keep attacking teams at bay. It is a great way to practise match day formations when the opposition has the ball.

**5** Once you have played this a few times, try it with one ball and the attackers linking up to attack the goal

### GAME PLAY

Look for good shape.

Get players to shoot early.

Praise quick pressing and any players winning the ball.

### How many players do I need?

We used eight players in the game with three attackers, four defenders and a goalkeeper.

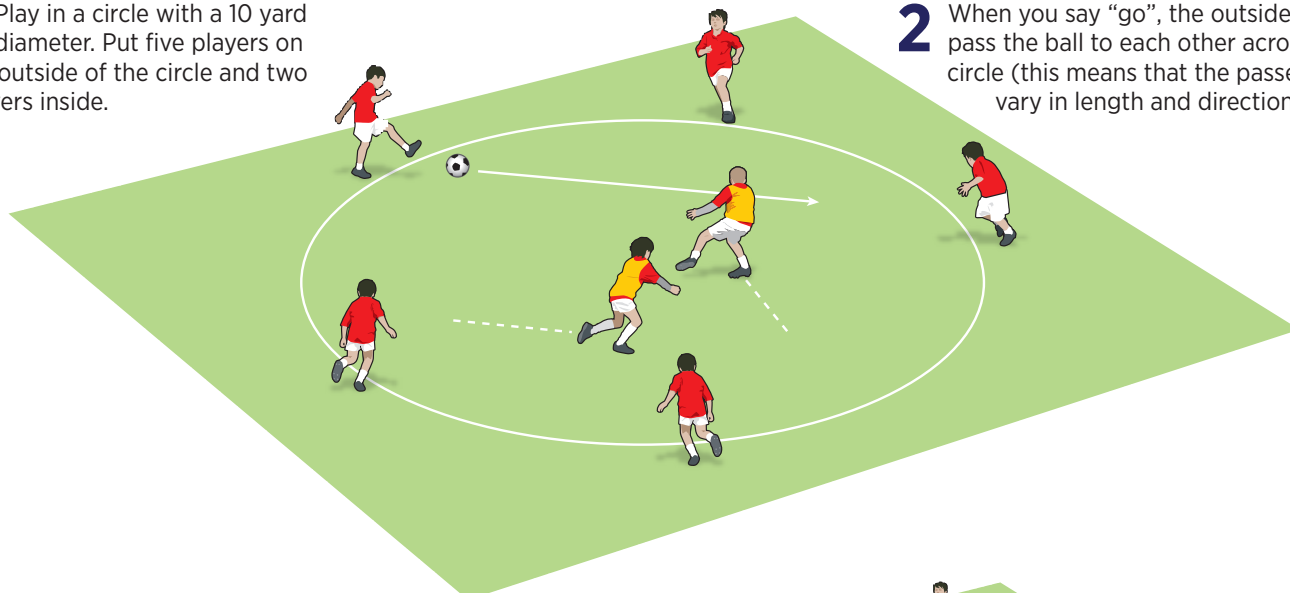
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

## Block passes by the other side

### ACTIVITY: MINI RONDOS

**CALL OUT** "Get to the ball before the other players" • "Support each other"

**1** Play in a circle with a 10 yard diameter. Put five players on the outside of the circle and two players inside.

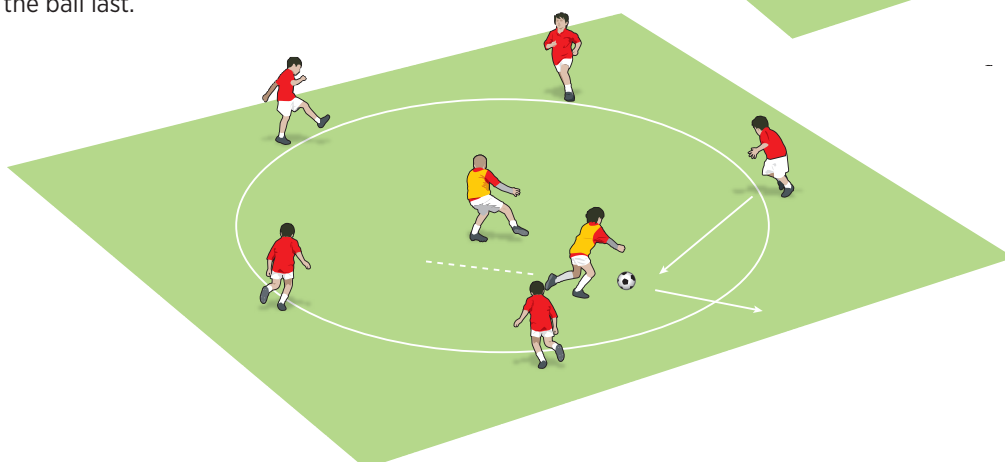


**2** When you say "go", the outside players pass the ball to each other across the circle (this means that the passes will vary in length and direction).

**3** The two players in the middle must try to win the ball from the others and play it out of the circle - think piggy in the middle with two players.



**4** The player that wins the ball swaps places with the player that played the ball last.



**5** This is very good for social and fun time as well as a good technique work out for this age group. You can use this as a warm up before training or matches

### How many players do I need?

We used seven players - two in the circle and five outside

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot



# Block passes by the other side

**GAME: HAND BALL**

**CALL OUT** "Get to the ball before the other players" • "Support each other"

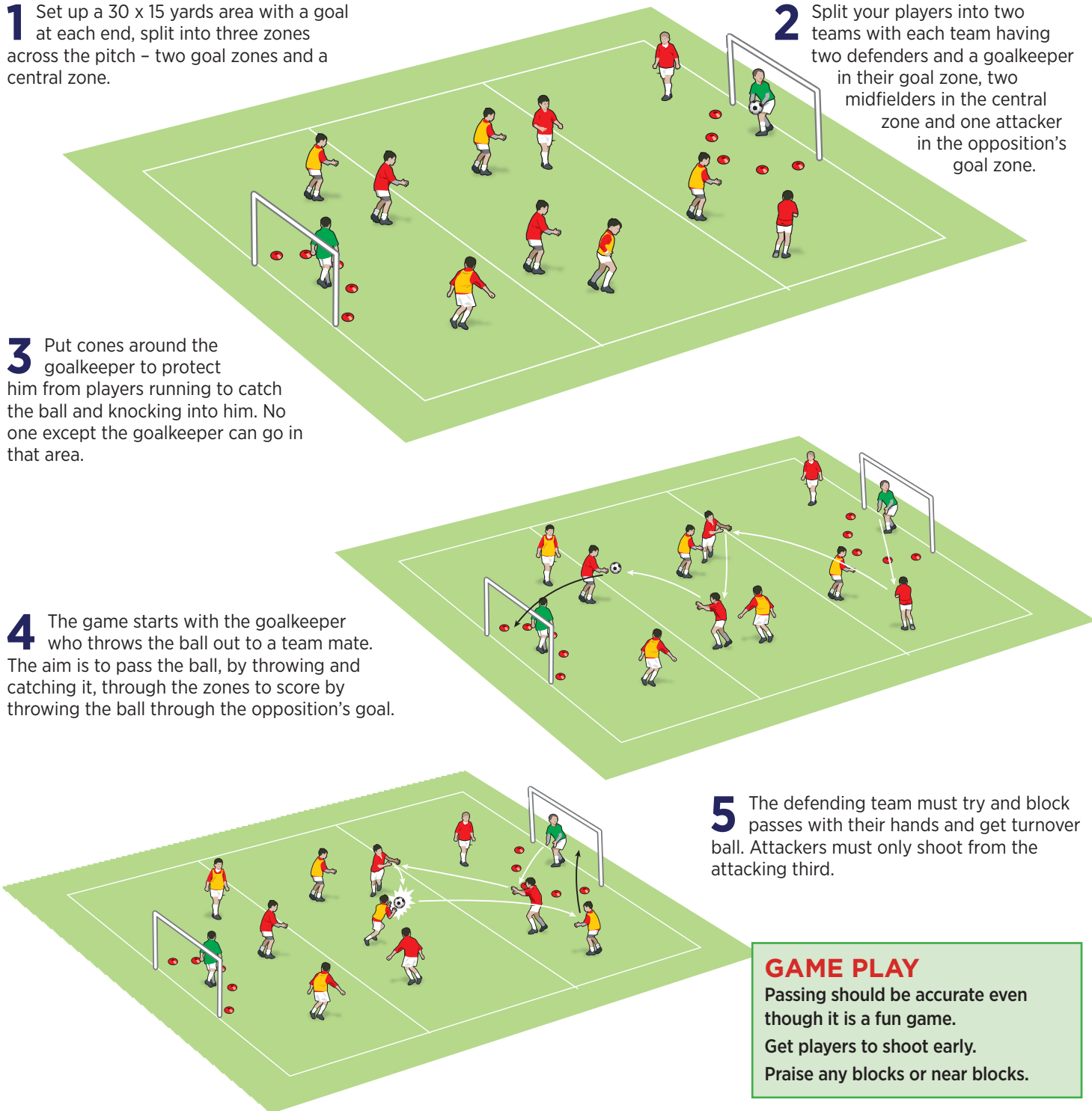
**1** Set up a 30 x 15 yards area with a goal at each end, split into three zones across the pitch – two goal zones and a central zone.

**2** Split your players into two teams with each team having two defenders and a goalkeeper in their goal zone, two midfielders in the central zone and one attacker in the opposition's goal zone.

**3** Put cones around the goalkeeper to protect him from players running to catch the ball and knocking into him. No one except the goalkeeper can go in that area.

**4** The game starts with the goalkeeper who throws the ball out to a team mate. The aim is to pass the ball, by throwing and catching it, through the zones to score by throwing the ball through the opposition's goal.

**5** The defending team must try and block passes with their hands and get turnover ball. Attackers must only shoot from the attacking third.



**GAME PLAY**  
Passing should be accurate even though it is a fun game.  
Get players to shoot early.  
Praise any blocks or near blocks.

**How many players do I need?**  
We used 12 players in the game.

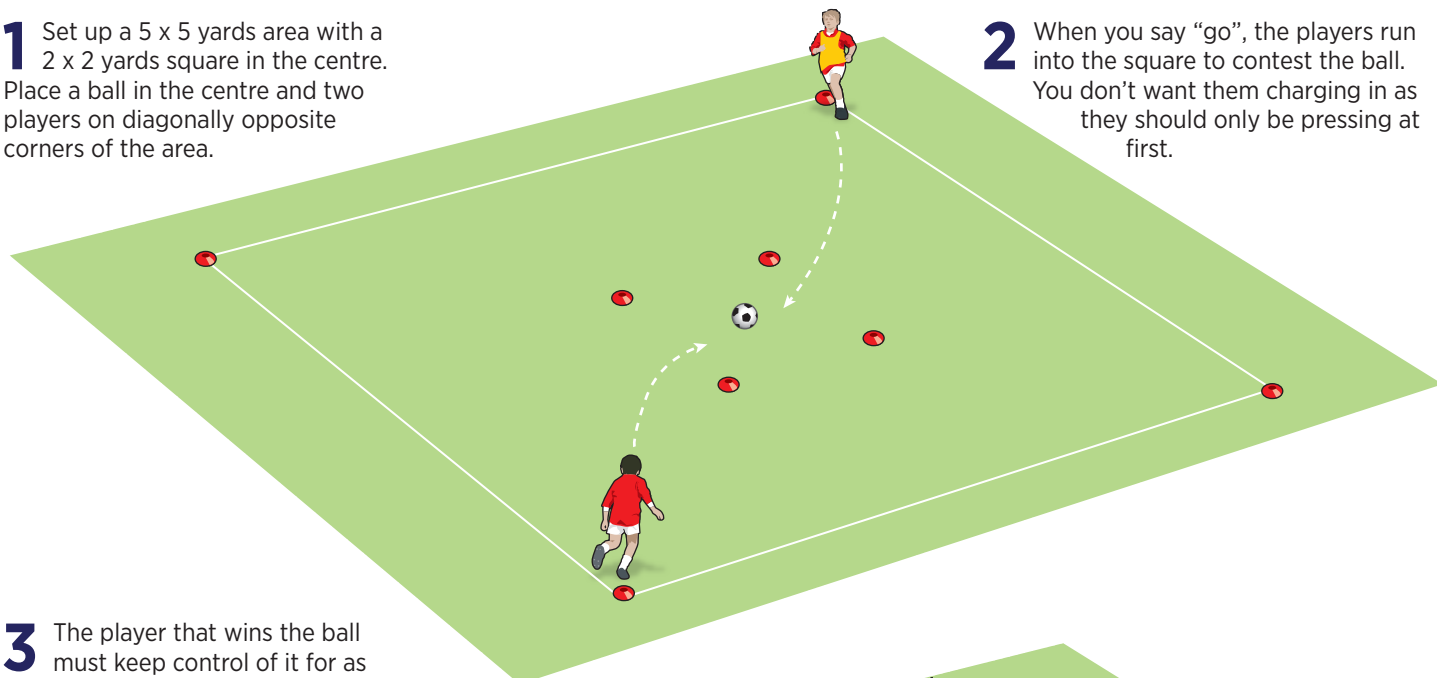
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	- - - - ->	—————>
	Run with the ball	Shot
	- - - - ->	—————>

# Make poke tackles in a 1v1

## ACTIVITY: 1V1 BATTLES

**CALL OUT** "See the ball with an opponent" • "Try to get the ball" • "Use any part of the foot"

**1** Set up a 5 x 5 yards area with a 2 x 2 yards square in the centre. Place a ball in the centre and two players on diagonally opposite corners of the area.



**2** When you say "go", the players run into the square to contest the ball. You don't want them charging in as they should only be pressing at first.

**3** The player that wins the ball must keep control of it for as long as possible.

**4** The player without the ball must try and press his opponent looking for a chance to make a poke tackle.



### Making a poke tackle

*Press the player with the ball and use any part of the foot to "poke" the ball away from his control*



**5** Play this for 1 or 2 minutes so the players get used to the idea of holding up play and using poke tackles to win the ball. The two players should stay inside the area but at first they may find that difficult. You can make the area bigger or allow them to go out of it.

### How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

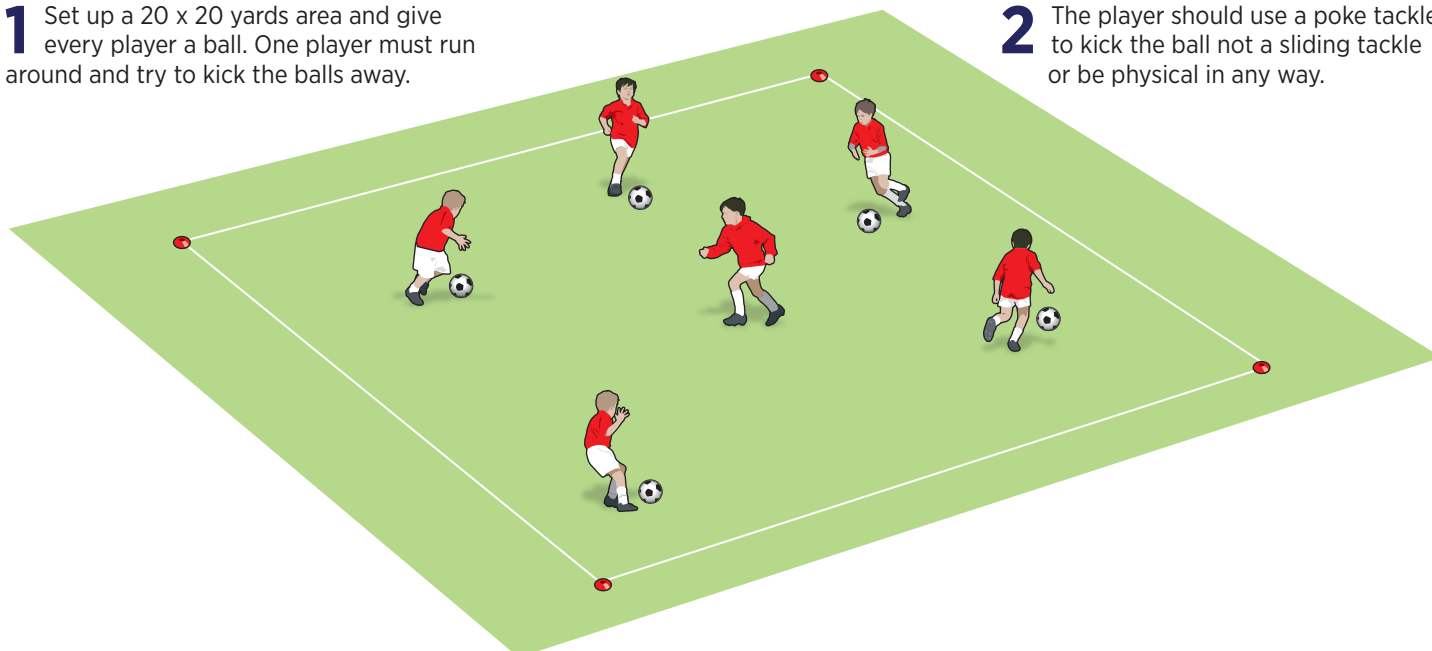
U8 | DEFENDING 4

# Make poke tackles in a 1v1

**GAME: WIN THE BALL**

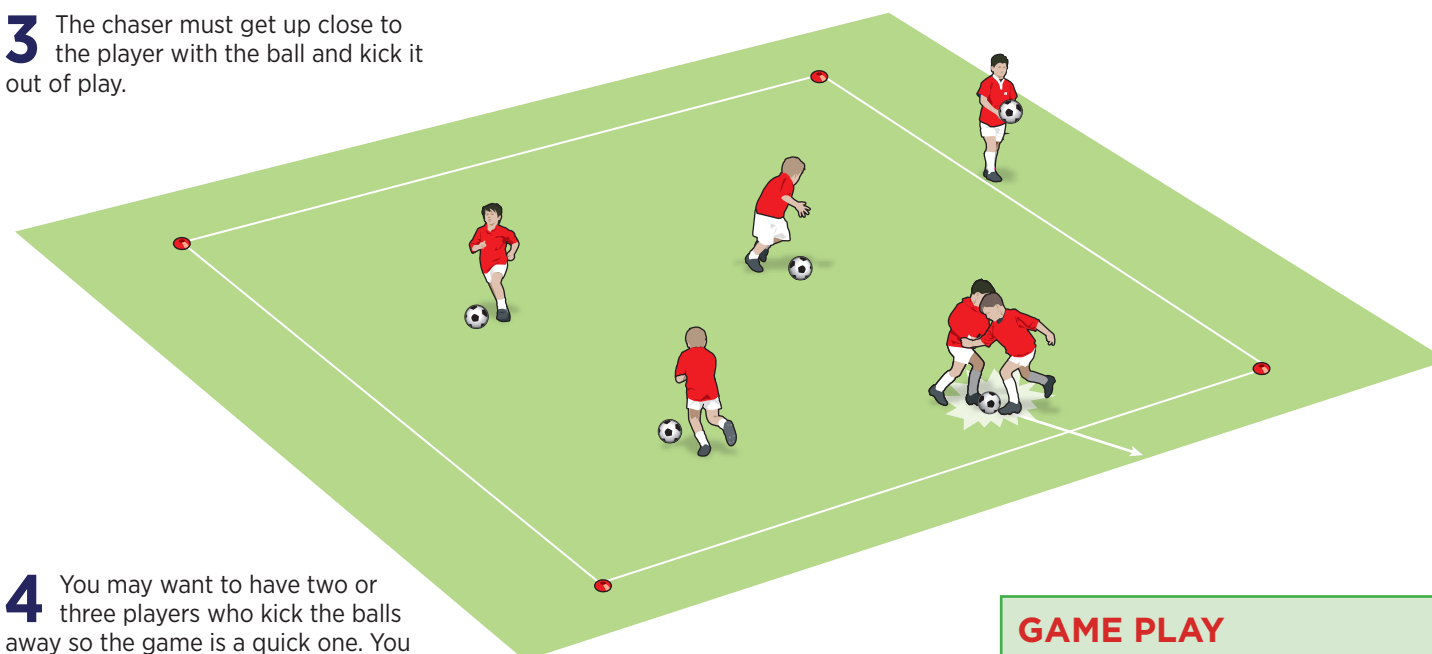
**CALL OUT** "See the ball with an opponent" • "Try to get the ball" • "Use any part of the foot"

**1** Set up a 20 x 20 yards area and give every player a ball. One player must run around and try to kick the balls away.



**2** The player should use a poke tackle to kick the ball not a sliding tackle or be physical in any way.

**3** The chaser must get up close to the player with the ball and kick it out of play.



**4** You may want to have two or three players who kick the balls away so the game is a quick one. You can get the players who lose the ball to help with the tackling.

### GAME PLAY

Encourage players to press and tackle.

Good fun for all.

Praise winning the ball.

### How many players do I need?

We used six players in the game.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→	→
	→	→
	→	→



# **EasiCoach**

**SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES**

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## **U7-U8**

### **RESOURCES**

# Parental checklist: U7 Mini Soccer skills

NAME OF PLAYER:	Beginning	Developing	Mastering
DATE:			
<b>BALL CONTROL</b>			
1 Pass the ball 2 yards to a team mate			
2 Receive and control the ball			
3 Dribble with a ball 5 yards in a straight line			
4 Dribble 5 yards, stopping half way			
<b>ATTACKING</b>			
1 Know the direction of play			
2 Dribble forward with the ball towards the opposition goal			
3 Pass accurately to a team mate (2 yards)			
4 Make a 2 yard pass and follow the ball			
5 Score a goal			
<b>DEFENDING</b>			
1 Know that you must retreat when your side loses the ball			
2 Pressing the player with the ball			
3 Block passes by the other side			

Notes: This assessment checklist is intended as a guide to progress only. Assess your child's progress against the three criteria above for 6 and 7-year-olds. For example, is your child mastering the concept of dribbling towards the opposition goal (for a 6-year-old)? Some skills will be mastered (for a 6-year-old) in a short space of time. Only the most able will master all the skills by the time they move to U8, but this doesn't matter. Some take longer to develop than others. Make copies of this page and regularly reassess your child's progress as a way of providing praise.

# Parental checklist: U8 Mini Soccer skills

NAME OF PLAYER:	Beginning	Developing	Mastering
DATE:			
<b>BALL CONTROL</b>			
1 Pass the ball 3 yards to a team mate			
2 Receive and control the ball (3 yards)			
3 Dribble with the ball 5 yards with one half turn			
4 Dribble 3 yards, stop and pass 3 yards			
<b>ATTACKING</b>			
1 Know the direction of play			
2 Dribble forward and shoot inside the penalty area			
3 Pass 2 yards to a team mate and run past him			
4 Make a 3 yard pass and follow the ball			
5 Score a goal			
<b>DEFENDING</b>			
1 Retreat to a defensive position when your side loses the ball			
2 Pressing the player with the ball			
3 Block passes by the other side			
4 Make poke tackles in a 1v1			

Notes: This assessment checklist is intended as a guide to progress only. Assess your child's progress against the three criteria above for 7 and 8-year-olds. For example, is your child mastering the concept of dribbling forward and shooting inside the penalty area (for a 7-year-old)? Some skills will be mastered (for a 7-year-old) in a short space of time. Only the most able will master all the skills by the time they move to U9, but this doesn't matter. Some take longer to develop than others. Make copies of this page and regularly reassess your child's progress as a way of providing praise.

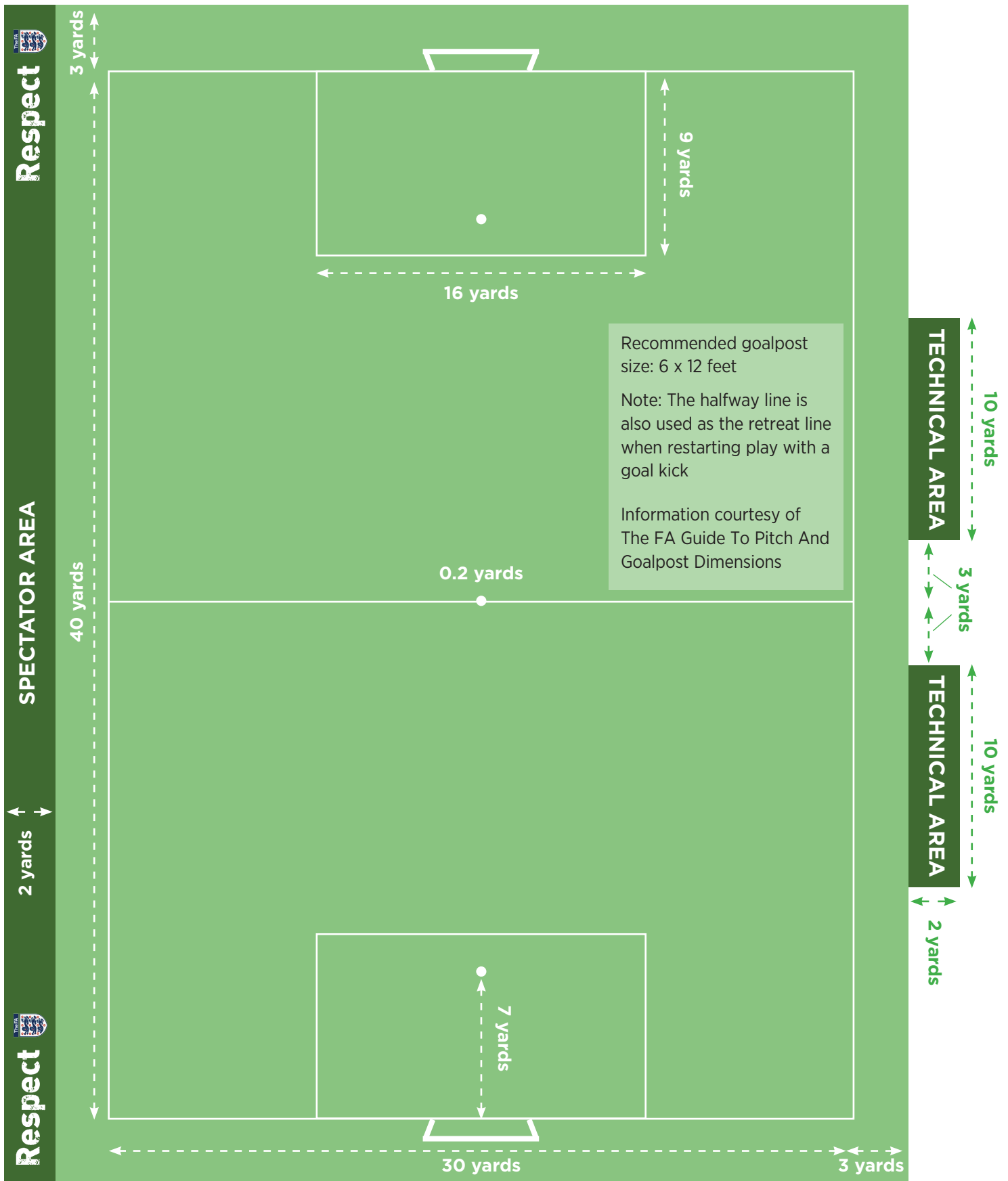
# Parental checklist: U7-U8 Mini Soccer skills

NAME OF PLAYER:	Beginning	Developing	Mastering
DATE:			
<b>RESTARTS</b>			
1 Kick-off			
2 Throw-in			
3 Corner kick			
4 Free kick			
5 Penalty kick			
<b>GOALKEEPING</b>			
1 Goal kick			
2 Stopping the ball			
3 Picking up the ball			
4 Handling the ball			

Notes: This assessment checklist is intended as a guide to progress only. Assess your child's progress against the three criteria above for 6 to 8-year-olds. For example, is your child mastering the concept of free kicks (for an 8-year-old)? Some skills will be mastered (for an 8-year-old) in a short space of time. Only the most able will master all the skills by the time they move to U9, but this doesn't matter. Some take longer to develop than others. Make copies of this page and regularly reassess your child's progress as a way of providing praise.



# FA RECOMMENDED PITCH SIZE U7-U8



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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### David Clarke

As Head Coach of Soccer Coach Weekly, David Clarke provides thousands of subscribers worldwide with drills, insight, interviews and webinars covering all aspects of coaching. Soccer Coach Weekly is now in its ninth season with over 400 issues produced.

Dave has coached grassroots teams for 20 years, from U7s to U16s and has always had as his goal to help young players to be the best they can.

Dave's qualifications include: UEFA B license and FA youth module 1, 2 and 3 qualified, the Coerver Youth Module, and he has been a lecturer and presenter for the National Soccer Coaches Association of America.



### How EasiCoach Was Created...

EasiCoach Soccer Curriculum™ has been created by the people who publish Soccer Coach Weekly coaching magazine. We have been publishing sports coaching advice for grassroots coaches since 2003.

Covering the key core skills required for consistent player development across five age ranges from U7 to U16, EasiCoach follows the latest guidelines on player development and has been approved by senior national coaching development officers.

As a coaching tool aimed at helping beginner coaches, volunteer assistants and helpers, EasiCoach offers a guaranteed programme of skills development activities every season.

EasiCoach is owned by Green Star Media Ltd, which provides informed, easy-to-follow advice for 450,000 soccer, rugby and basketball coaches in more than 80 countries. For more information, please visit [www.greenstarmedia.net](http://www.greenstarmedia.net)



# 30-DAY TRIAL FOR 97p

Become a better coach and win more games with 30-day trial of **Soccer Coach Weekly** for just 97p!

### Work Your Strike Force

**SCORE LIKE POGGBA**

Pass, turn, shoot then move quickly to get back into position - this session encourages your players to get to the ball first and shoot quickly

**WHY USE IT**  
On match days it is always great to get your players to get to the ball first and shoot quickly. This session will give them a good warm-up for scoring goals.

**SET UP**  
This needs a ball, two cones and a goal. Use the goalkeepers and set up cones 5 yards from the goal and two cones set out across the pitch, with one cone in the middle of each cone on the 16 yard line.

**HOW TO PLAY**  
The referee starts at goalkeeper and a starting signal. The central player sets the ball and moves through the cones. The referee and teacher a cone and returns to get the ball back. Once the cone has been reached, the player should move who crosses the most from that cone. Add a defender to put pressure on the other.

**TECHNIQUE**  
First touch is the key to get the ball from under their feet. Good passing technique to shoot through the cones.

**Player movement** ●●●●● **Ball movement** ●●●●● **Run with ball** ●●●●● **Shoot** ●●●●●

### 5 Minute Technique: Dribbling

**FOCUS ON CONTROL TO**

Each player has a ball - we need 6 balls in the session.

The players make one change of direction and take a set piece every 30 seconds.

**Focus: First touch and pass**

The starting player receives and passes back to the referee.

Then the working player runs around the cones to take a shot and repeats.

### Defenders Into Strikers

**NEW SERIES**

Players like Thiago Silva and David Luiz can offer an attacking by surprise.

With his debut season and a goal through a central defender from a wide in the early stages.

Indeed Thiago Silva was the star for PSG in the quarter final. Gary Cahill scored for the Chelsea with a volley but former Chelsea player could not control the game level at 1-1 and then Silva went in an amazing finish to win the game for PSG on away goals.

That is some goal scoring by the PSG attacking both with forwards.

The only the training session on the defender can be able your players and encourage great goals to score that they should be in the PSG. David Luiz and David Luiz goal through the Thiago Silva and Chelsea Gary Cahill.

**TIPS FOR ATTACKING CENTRE BACKS**  
When you attacking centre backs from their own half, they must be ready to defend and try to recognise the right time to make a difference to the game. They should:

- Advance higher up the pitch and get in with the midfield
- Pick out risky passes to the forwards and follow with support play
- Block out central balls with power, precision and timing
- Shoot when the opportunity arises
- Support central balls with movement around the box

Words by Andy Green  
Action by David Carter

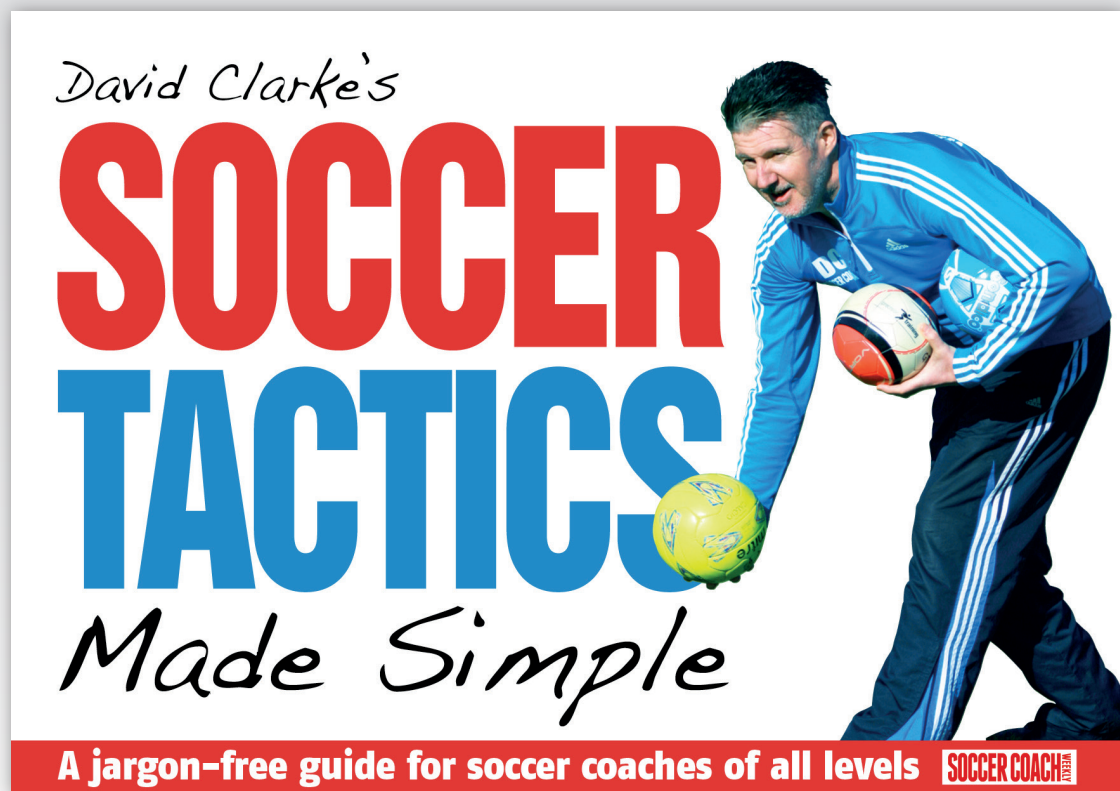
Photo: David Luiz scores against Chelsea

Photo: Thiago Silva

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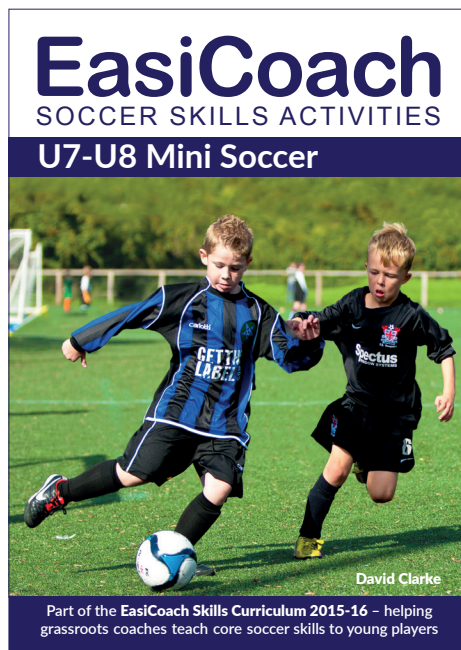
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**EasiCoach** is from the author of the best-selling *Made Simple* manuals



To buy these manuals visit:  
[www.soccercoachweekly.net](http://www.soccercoachweekly.net)





*EasiCoach* provides ready-made, age-appropriate, safe training activities, set out clearly on a single page, that even a child could understand.

For each activity there is also a relevant game, so the players learn a skill in an activity and then use that skill in a game.

Follow all the materials in this manual and your players will be learning the right skills for their age group.

They will be having more fun, and be on a gradual development pathway that will make them better, more skilful, players and continue playing soccer for longer.

**SOCCER COACH** WEEKLY