

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U13-U14



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

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INTRODUCTION

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.

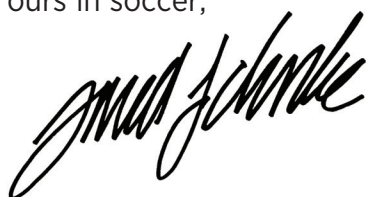
For each activity there is also a relevant game, so the players learn a skill in an activity and then use that skill in a game. This helps to implant the skill into a player’s DNA for them to use throughout their playing adventure. The activities and games are simple and easy to follow, and will make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

Your EasiCoach Activity Sheets

Each of the activities in this manual covers a simple soccer skill appropriate for U13 or U14 age groups.

Some players in these age groups will have been playing soccer for a good few years but don't worry too much if you were not involved previously. Many things are new to everyone involved, and the main objective is for the players 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 two or (depending on time) three activities from this book, and then play a game.
- Details on how to run a game are below.

The EasiCoach Beginners Guide to U13-U14

Here are the main things you need to know about coaching and organising U13 and U14 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 2 hours at the U13 and U14 age groups. At a typical training session you should plan for no more than three EasiCoach activities, each taking 25-30 minutes including setup and water breaks, followed by a game for 30-40 minutes.

Set up: Arrive earlier than the players, if you can, to set up the playing area for the chosen activities for the session. Set up two or three 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.

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!

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 U13-U14 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.



Goal size: In the UK, the distance between the posts is 21 feet (US: 24 feet) and the distance between the lower edge of the cross bar and the ground is 7 feet (US: 8 feet).

The ball: The UK and the US play with a size 5 ball. It should be safe and made of leather or other suitable material.

Number of players: UK and US play 11v11.

A match may not START if either team consists of fewer than seven players. The minimum number of players in a team required for a match to CONTINUE is also seven. 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 Youth 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 100 minutes. 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 35 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 15 minutes.

A 1-2-3 of Coaching 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

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

HOW MANY PLAYERS DO I NEED tells you the ideal number of players required to run the activity, but you can adapt it to suit the number players who arrive at training

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U13

BALL CONTROL

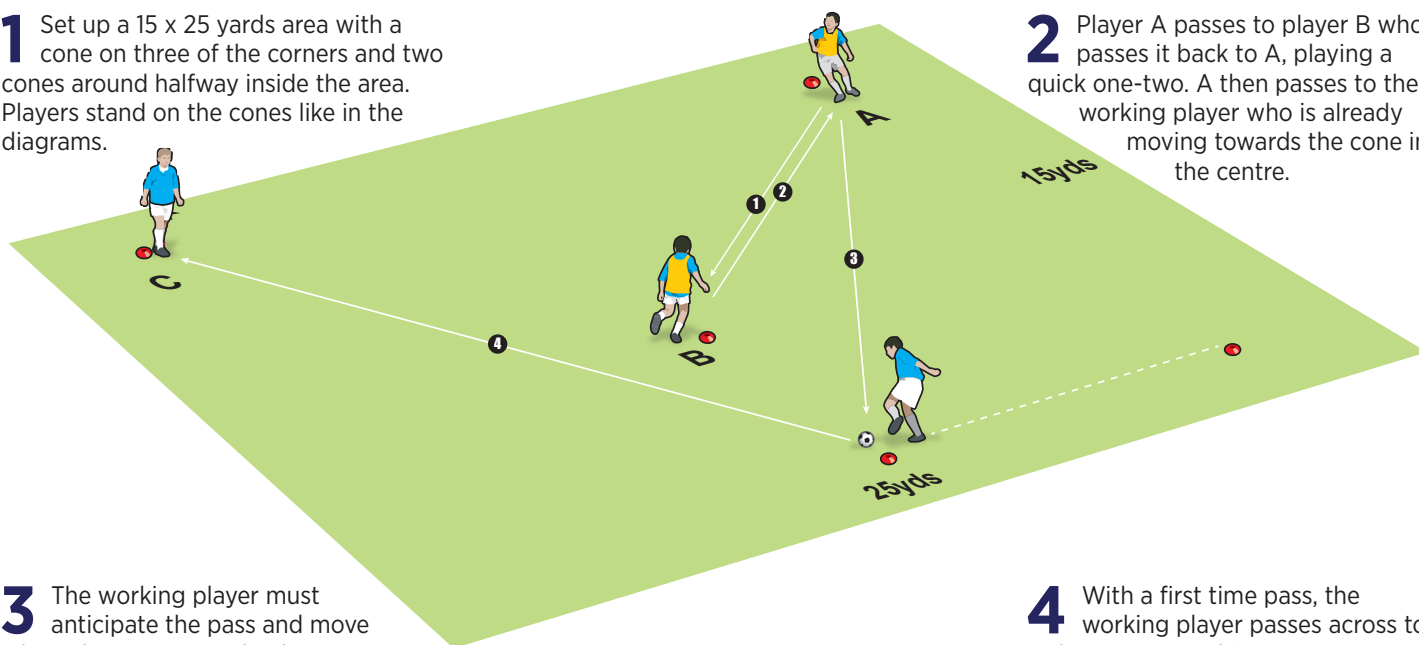
Pass and receive over different distances

ACTIVITY: FIND THE MOVING PLAYER

CALL OUT

“Look where the pass is going” • “Use crisp, accurate passing” • “Know where the ball is” • “Anticipate the pass”

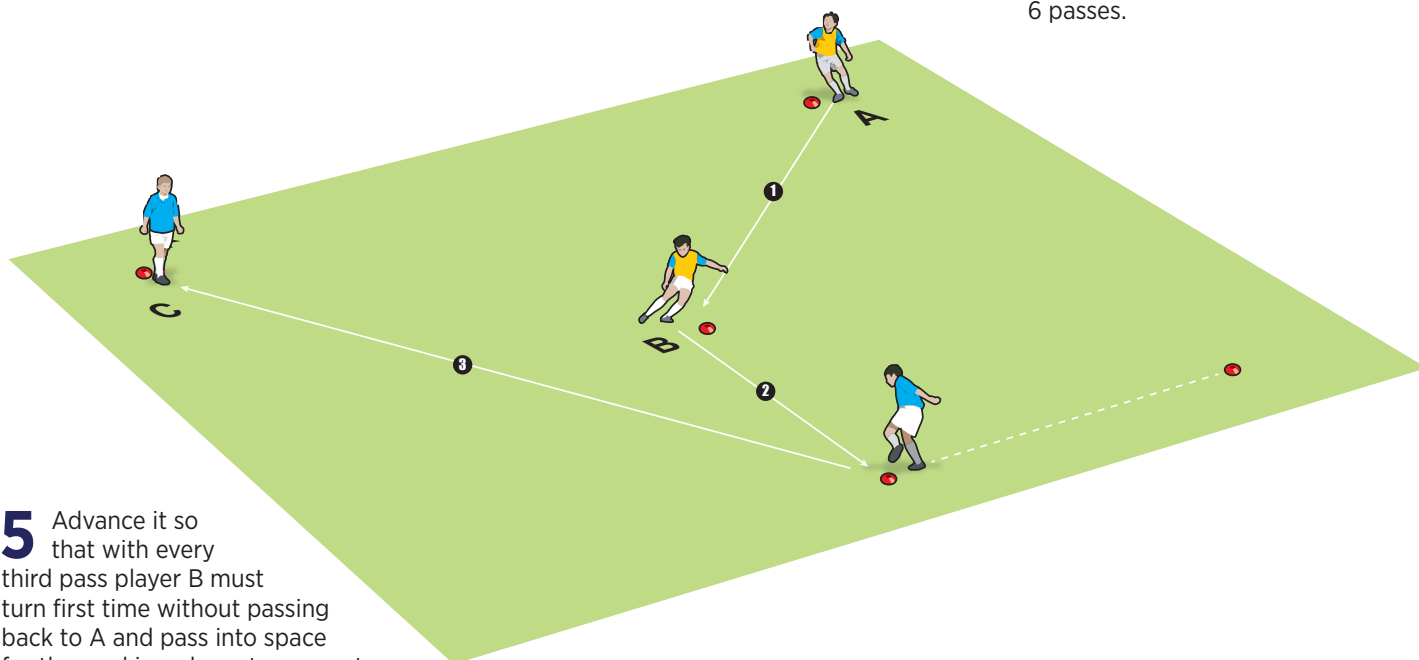
1 Set up a 15 x 25 yards area with a cone on three of the corners and two cones around halfway inside the area. Players stand on the cones like in the diagrams.



2 Player A passes to player B who passes it back to A, playing a quick one-two. A then passes to the working player who is already moving towards the cone in the centre.

3 The working player must anticipate the pass and move when player B passes back to player A.

4 With a first time pass, the working player passes across to C then returns to his cone. C passes back to A and the sequence begins again – players keep positions for 6 passes.



5 Advance it so that with every third pass player B must turn first time without passing back to A and pass into space for the working player to run on to – as a result, the working player must move quicker to get to the pass.

How many players do I need?

Use four players in the set up.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement

U13 | BALL CONTROL 1

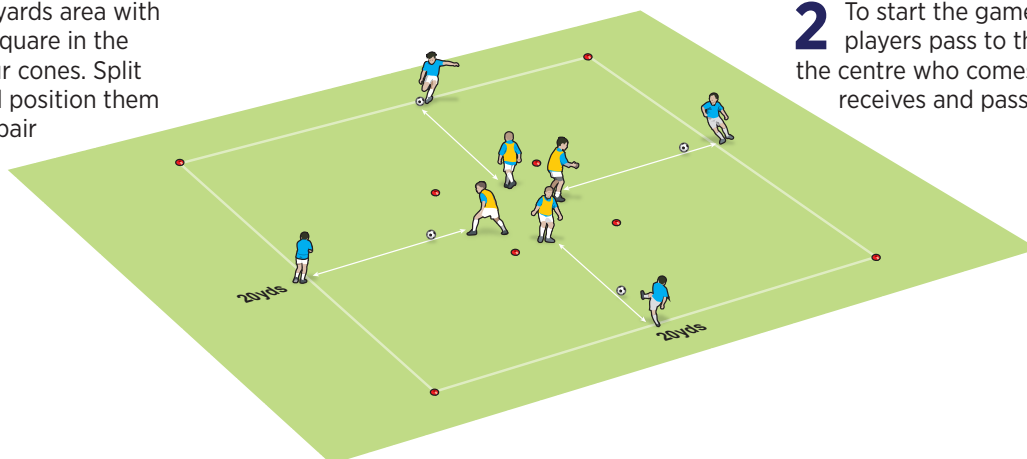
Pass and receive over different distances

GAME: PASS WITH PURPOSE

CALL OUT

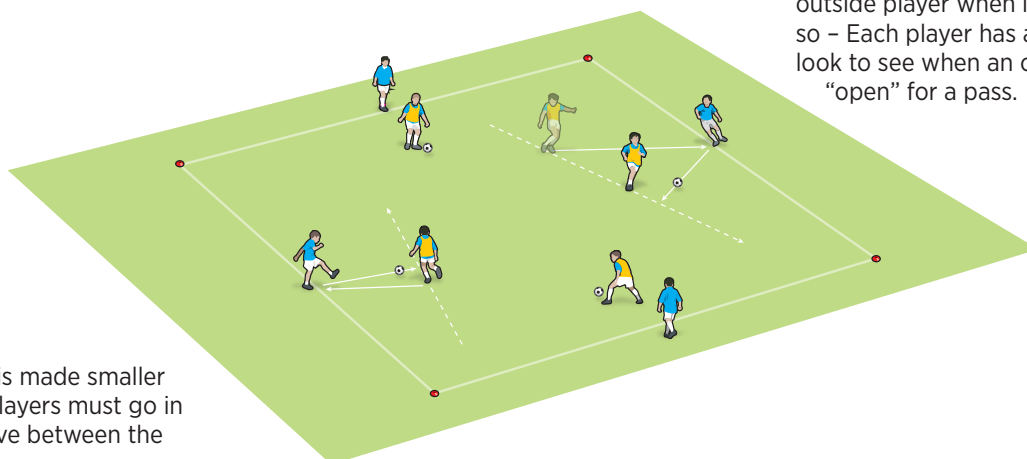
“Look where the pass is going” • “Use crisp, accurate passing” • “Know where the ball is” • “Anticipate the pass”

1 Set up a 20 x 20 yards area with a smaller 6 yard square in the centre marked by four cones. Split players into pairs and position them as shown. Give each pair a ball.



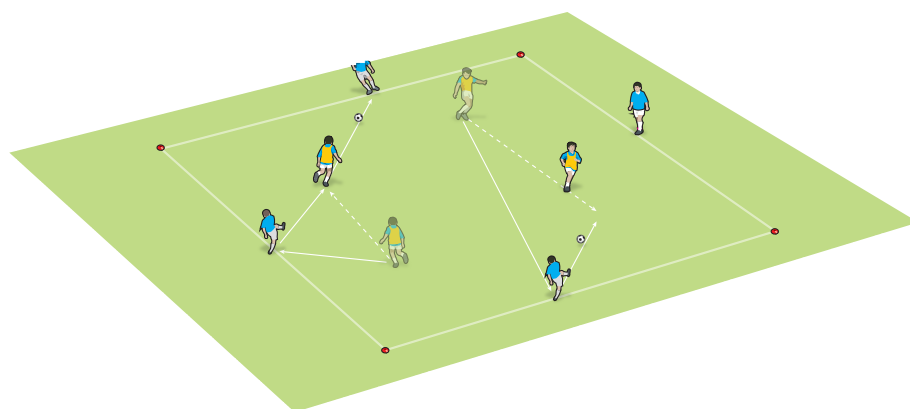
2 To start the game, the outside players pass to the player in the centre who comes to the ball, receives and passes back.

3 After the pass, the centre players move quickly to the next cone.



4 Now the cones are removed and players play a one-two with an outside player when it is clear to do so – Each player has a ball and must look to see when an outside player is “open” for a pass.

5 Finally, the area is made smaller and the centre players must go in pairs to pass and move between the four outside players.



GAME PLAY

When and where to pass.
Accurate passing.
Good first touch.

How many players do I need?

You need eight players in this game.

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

Receive, control and pass

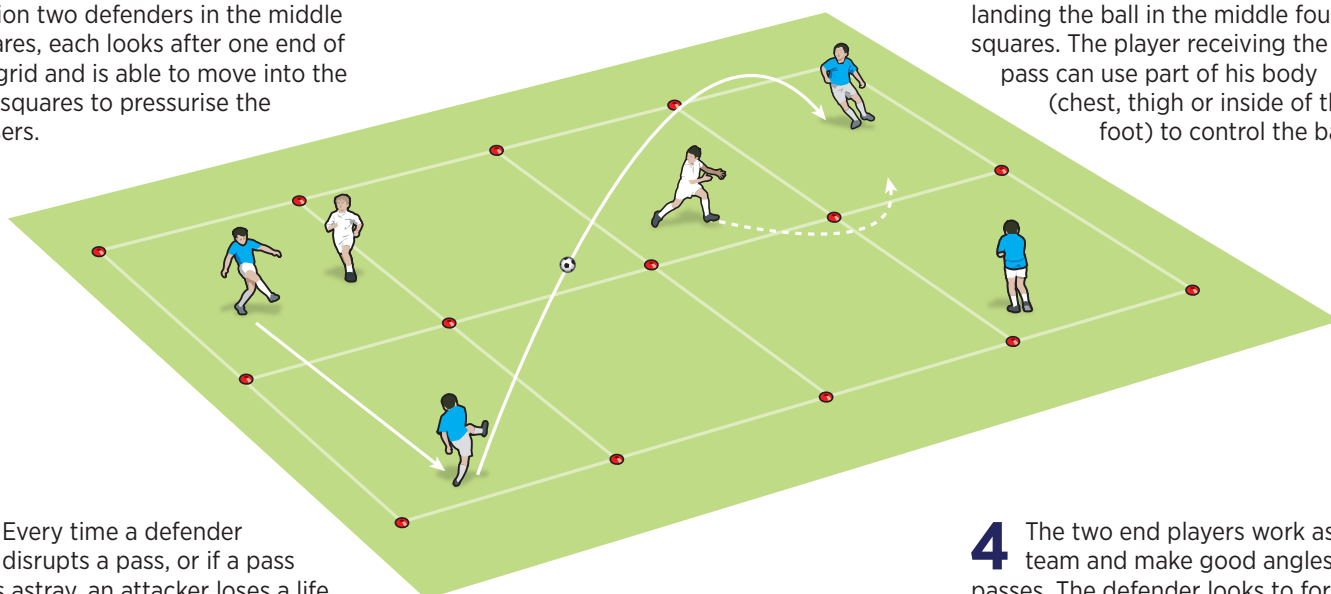
ACTIVITY: FIND A TEAM MATE UNDER PRESSURE

CALL OUT

“Call for the ball” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Use part of your body or the inside of the foot to control the ball”

1 Mark out eight 10 x 10 yards squares arranged in 4 x 2 grid. Put a passing player in each of the end squares. Station two defenders in the middle squares, each looks after one end of the grid and is able to move into the end squares to pressurise the passers.

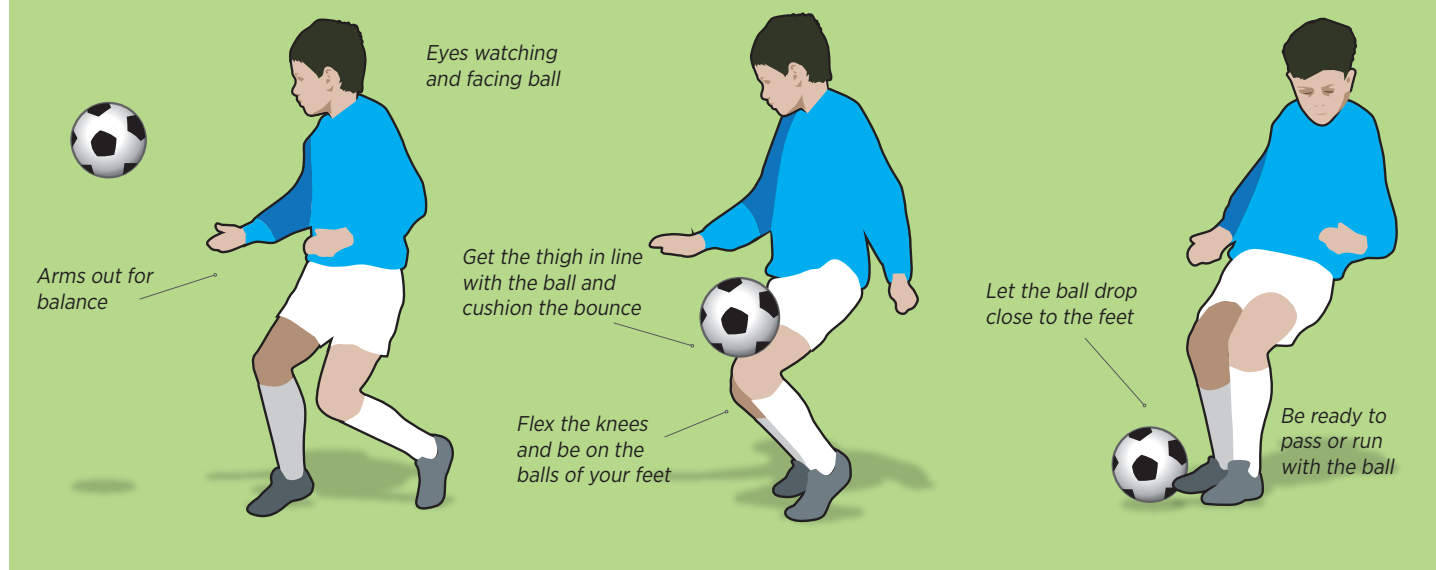
2 The passing players aim to make lofted passes to team mates at the other end of the grid without landing the ball in the middle four squares. The player receiving the pass can use part of his body (chest, thigh or inside of the foot) to control the ball.



3 Every time a defender disrupts a pass, or if a pass goes astray, an attacker loses a life. When an attacker completes a pass, a defender loses a life. First to lose three lives loses the game.

4 The two end players work as a team and make good angles for passes. The defender looks to force a player to use his weaker foot and make mistakes.

Controlling the ball on the thigh



How many players do I need?

We used six players for this activity

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

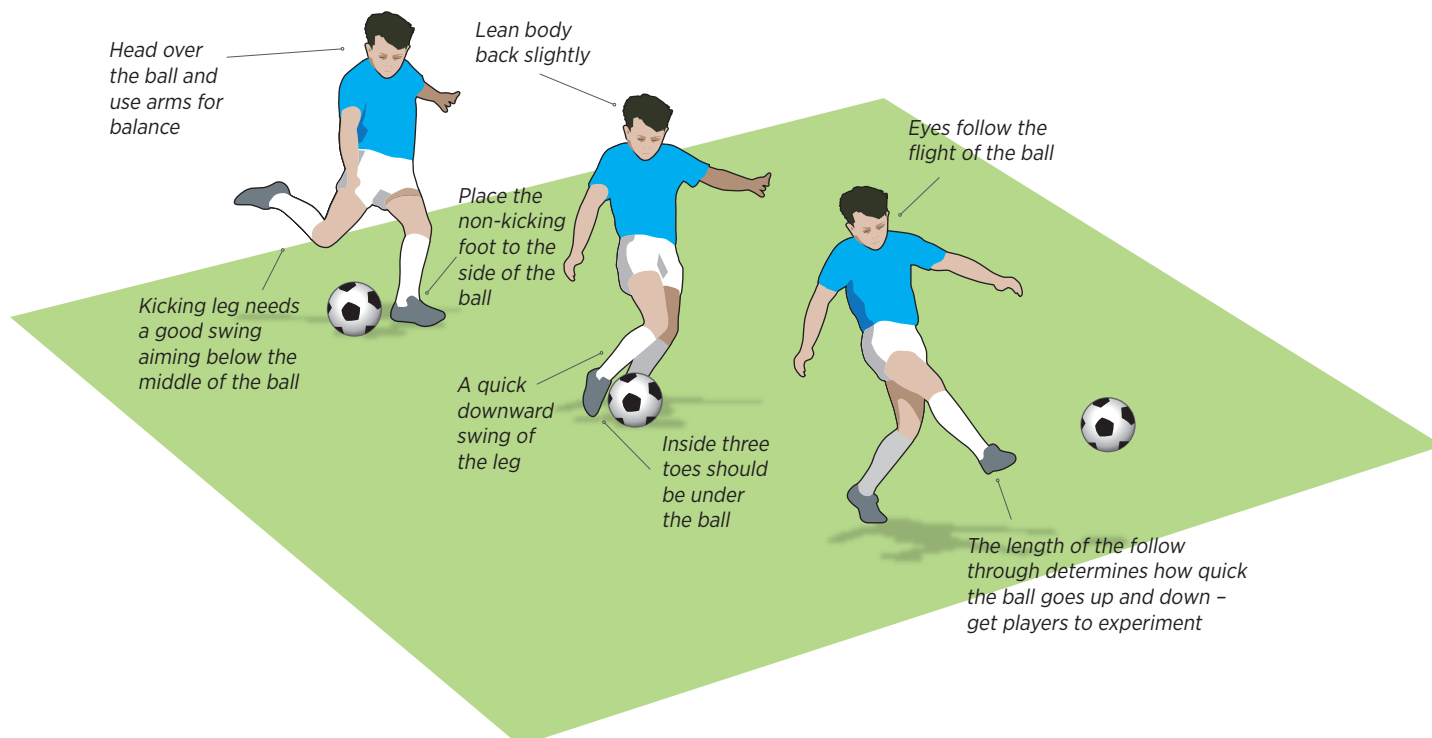
Receive, control and pass

GAME: MAKE A LOFTED PASS

CALL OUT

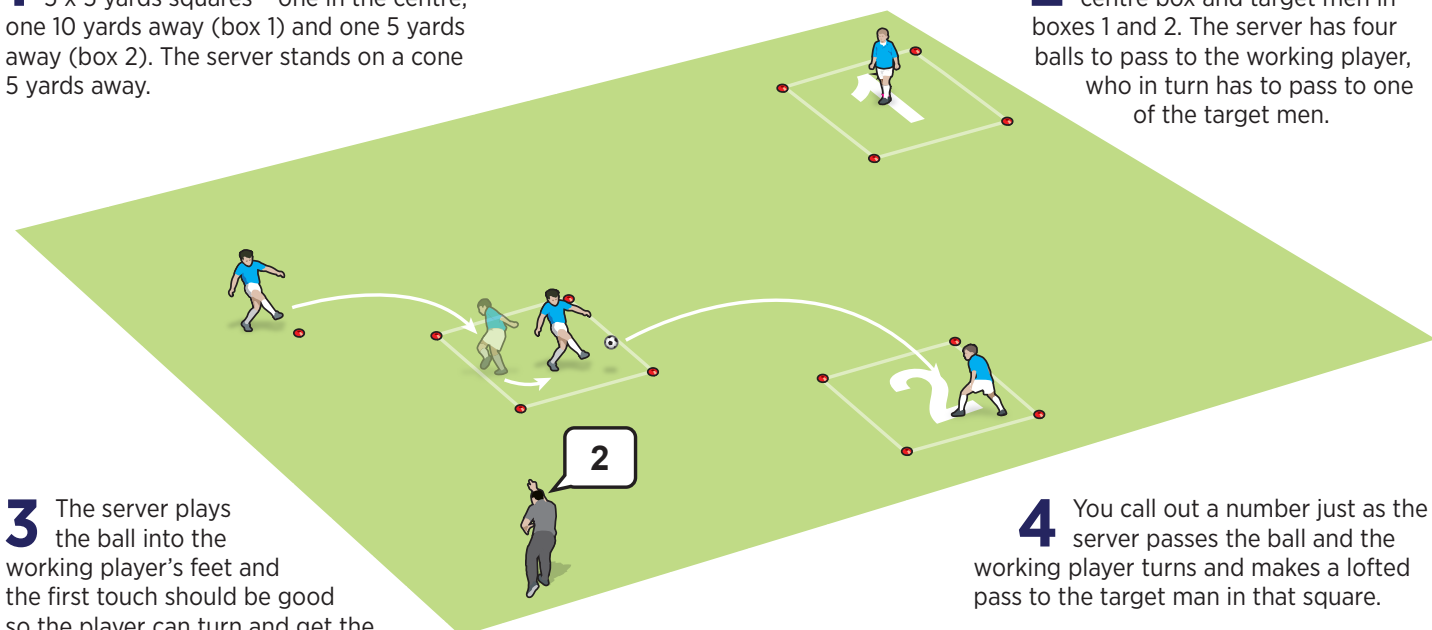
“Look to where the pass is going” • “Use the inside of the foot near the toe to lift the ball over the cones” • “Be accurate with both feet”

Making a lofted pass



1 You need balls and cones and three 5 x 5 yards squares – one in the centre, one 10 yards away (box 1) and one 5 yards away (box 2). The server stands on a cone 5 yards away.

2 Put the working player in the centre box and target men in boxes 1 and 2. The server has four balls to pass to the working player, who in turn has to pass to one of the target men.



3 The server plays the ball into the working player's feet and the first touch should be good so the player can turn and get the pass away.

4 You call out a number just as the server passes the ball and the working player turns and makes a lofted pass to the target man in that square.

How many players do I need?

You need 4 players.

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

Dribble and change direction with the ball

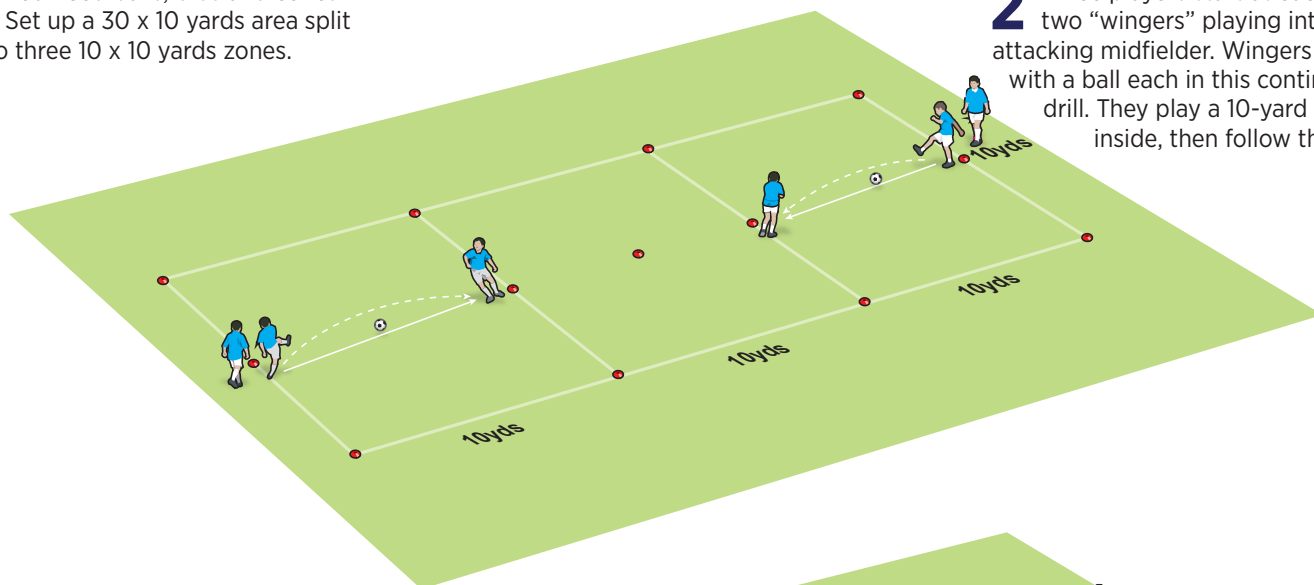
ACTIVITY: SMART INTERPLAY

CALL OUT

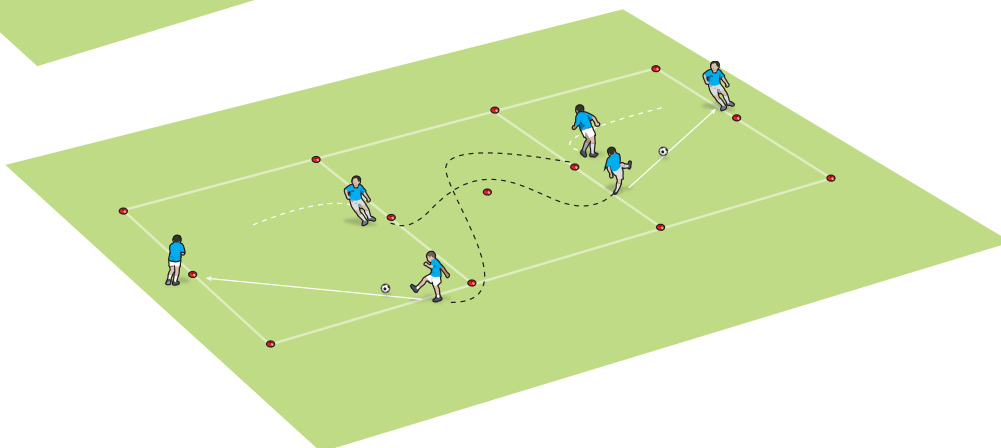
“Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Look up to see where the cone is” • “Look up often as you dribble” • “Anticipate the pass”

1 You need balls, bibs and cones. Set up a 30 x 10 yards area split into three 10 x 10 yards zones.

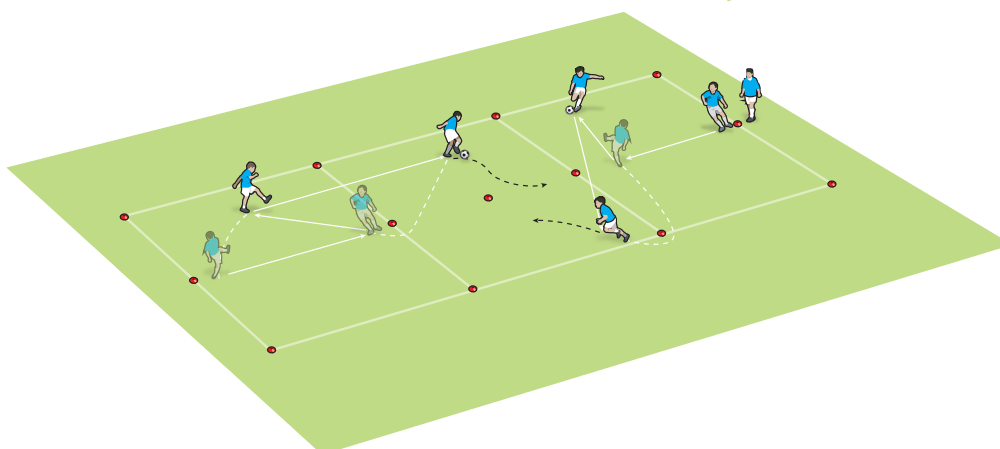
2 Three players start at each end, two “wingers” playing into an attacking midfielder. Wingers begin with a ball each in this continuous drill. They play a 10-yard pass inside, then follow the pass.



3 Receiving inner midfielders must be inventive as they move through the cones, playing a pass out on the other side.



4 They then remain in place to receive the next pass and the move continues.



5 Now add a one-two from the winger to the attacking midfielder as the ball moves forward – players can be inventive with this part of the session. Get them to experiment with their passes.

How many players do I need?

This activity needs six players.

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

U13 | BALL CONTROL 3

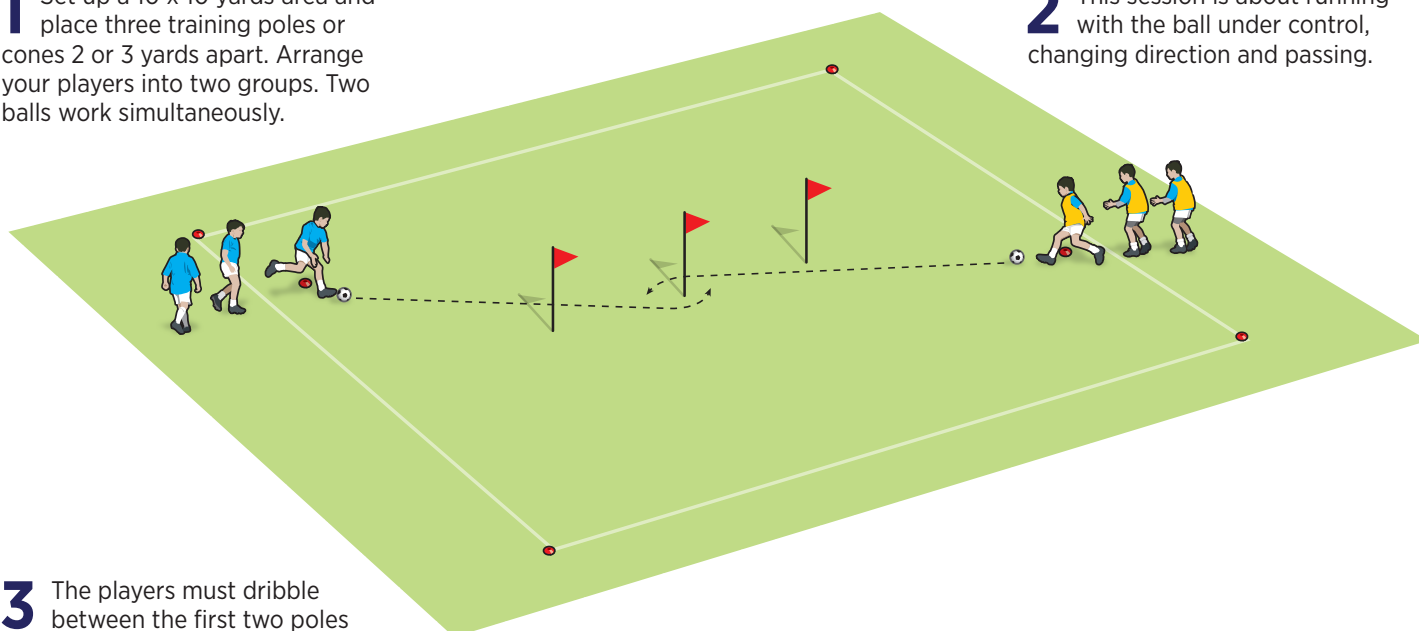
Dribble and change direction with the ball

GAME: DRIBBLE AND AVOID PLAYERS

CALL OUT

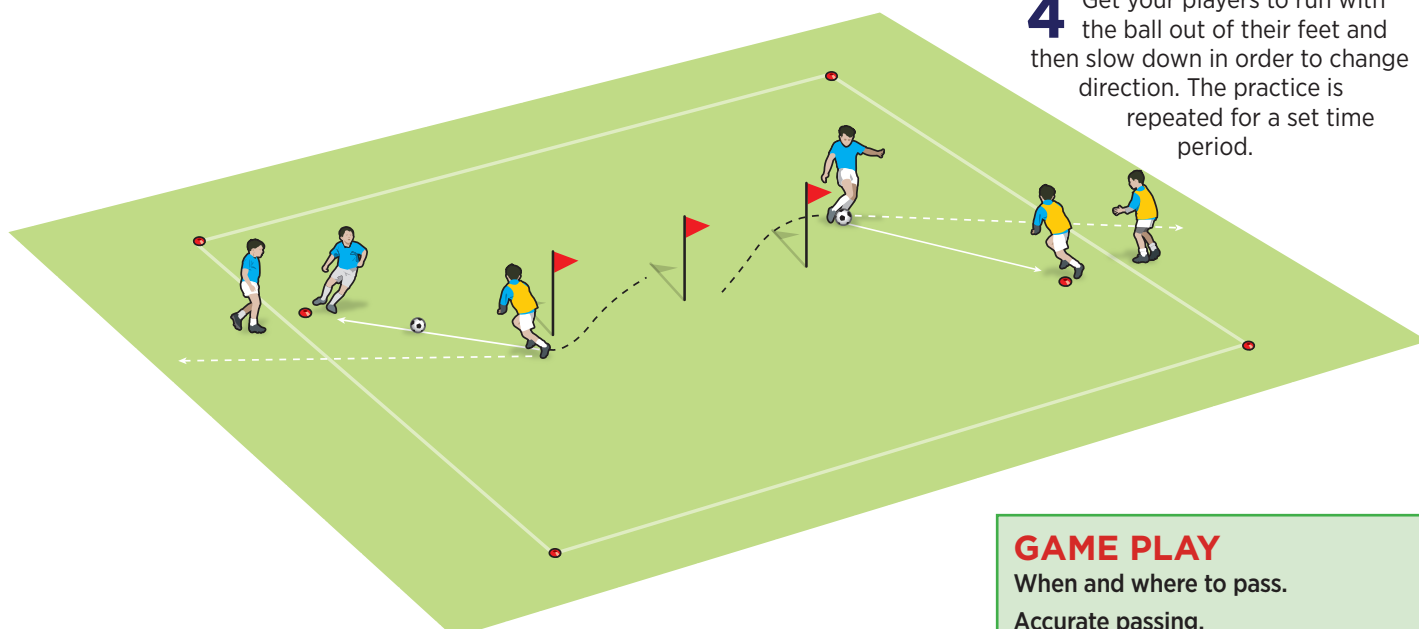
“Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Look up to see where the cone is” • “Look up often as you dribble” • “Anticipate the pass”

1 Set up a 10 x 10 yards area and place three training poles or cones 2 or 3 yards apart. Arrange your players into two groups. Two balls work simultaneously.



2 This session is about running with the ball under control, changing direction and passing.

3 The players must dribble between the first two poles facing then back between the second and third poles in order to make a pass to the opposite team.



4 Get your players to run with the ball out of their feet and then slow down in order to change direction. The practice is repeated for a set time period.

GAME PLAY

When and where to pass.
Accurate passing.
Good first touch.

How many players do I need?

You need at least six players for this game to run smoothly.

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

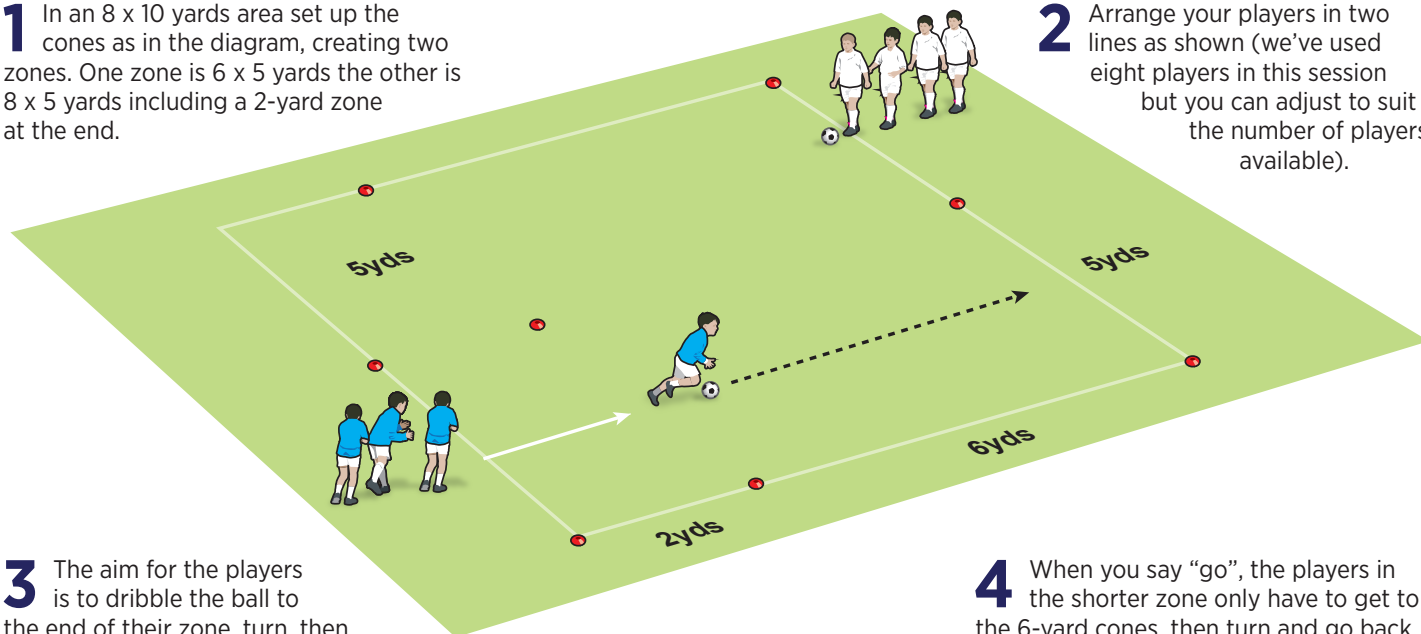
Run with the ball and pass at speed

ACTIVITY: DRIBBLE AT PACE

CALL OUT

“Look at the ball for coordination” • “Look up often when dribbling” • “Speed up to beat your opponents”

1 In an 8 x 10 yards area set up the cones as in the diagram, creating two zones. One zone is 6 x 5 yards the other is 8 x 5 yards including a 2-yard zone at the end.

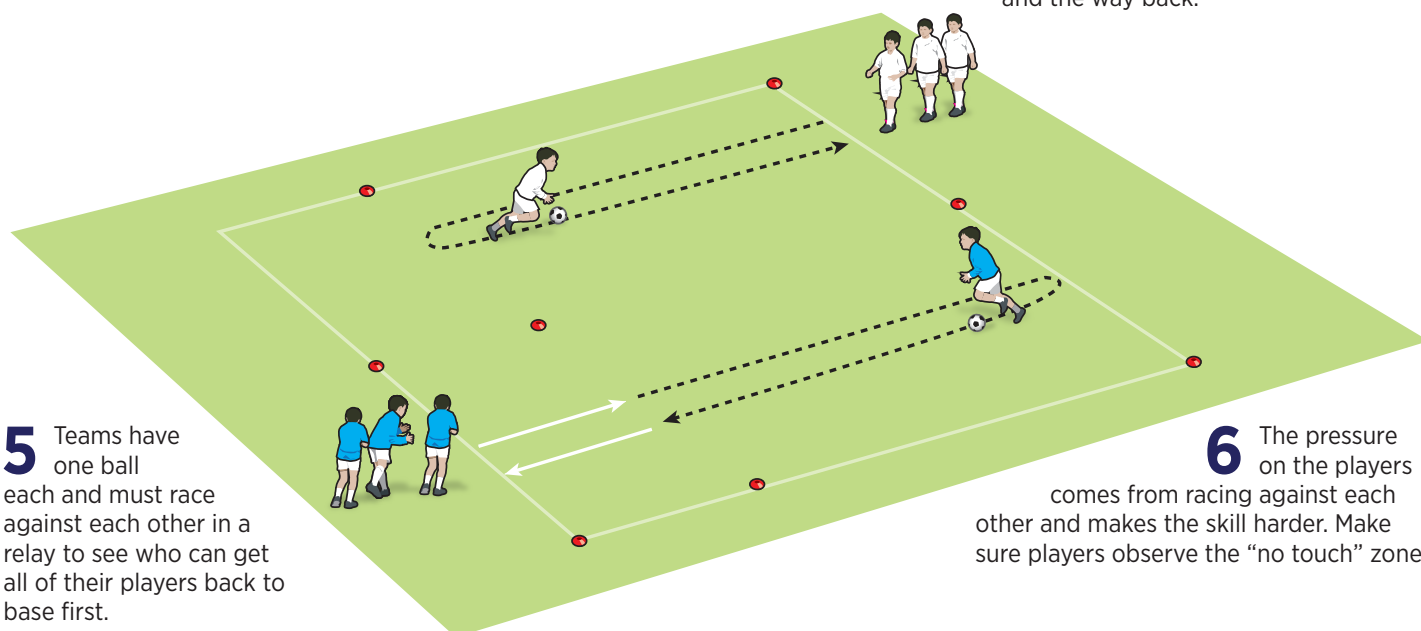


2 Arrange your players in two lines as shown (we've used eight players in this session but you can adjust to suit the number of players available).

3 The aim for the players is to dribble the ball to the end of their zone, turn, then dribble back again.

4 When you say “go”, the players in the shorter zone only have to get to the 6-yard cones, then turn and go back. The team that has the no touch zone must pass the ball across the zone before touching it again, both on the way out and the way back.

5 Teams have one ball each and must race against each other in a relay to see who can get all of their players back to base first.



6 The pressure on the players comes from racing against each other and makes the skill harder. Make sure players observe the “no touch” zone.

How many players do I need?

We used eight players but you can use as many as you need in this activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U13 | BALL CONTROL 4

Run with the ball and pass at speed

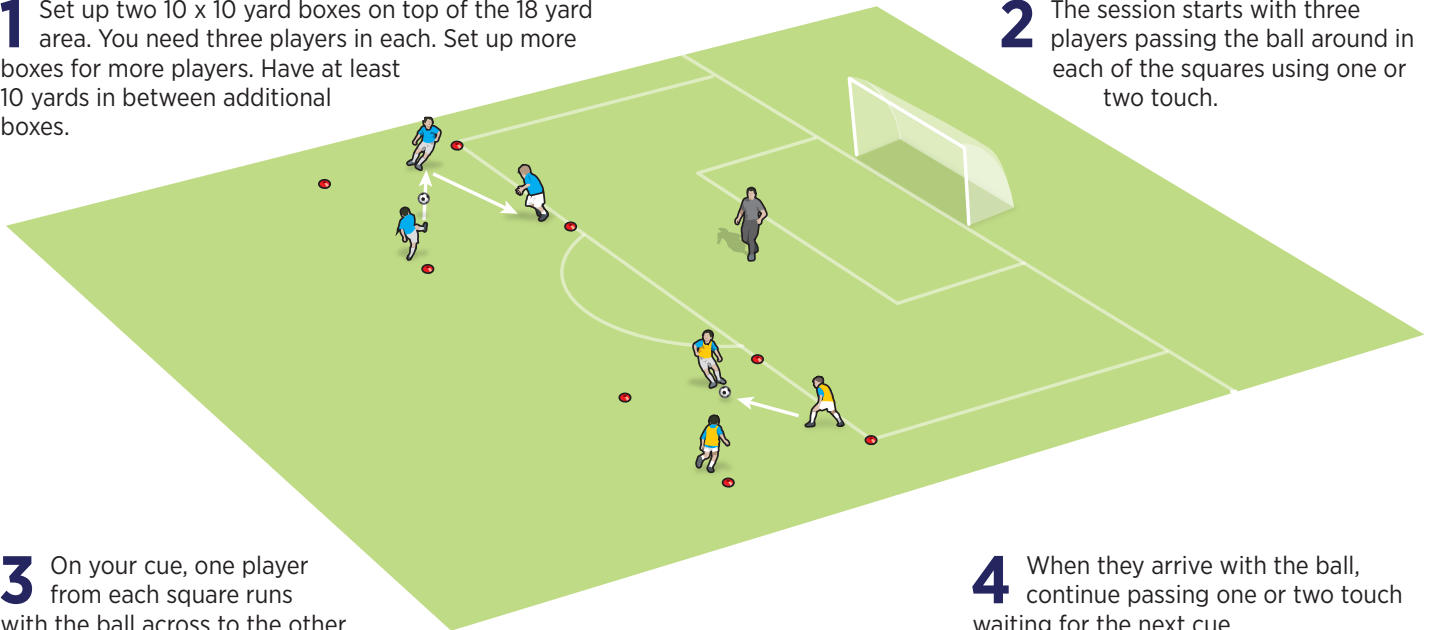
GAME: BOX TO BOX PLAYERS

CALL OUT

“Look at the ball for coordination” • “Look up to see where the other group are” •
“Look up often as you dribble” • “pass with pace in your groups”

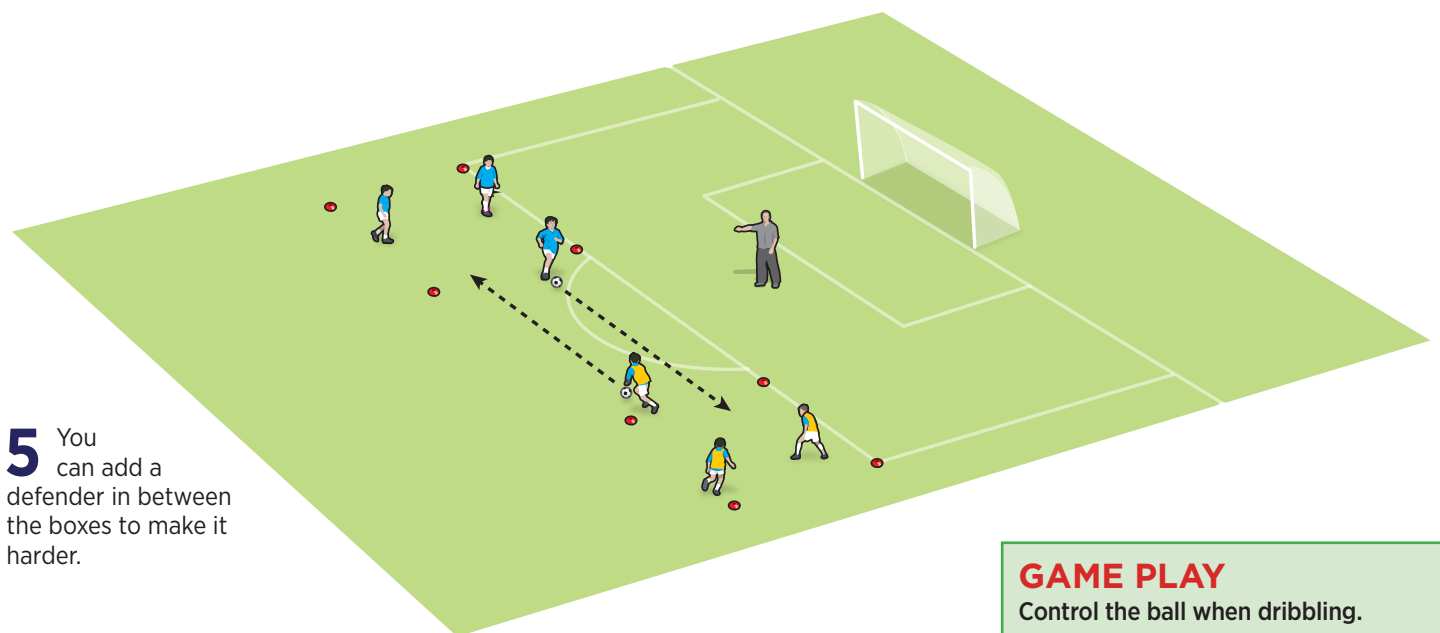
1 Set up two 10 x 10 yard boxes on top of the 18 yard area. You need three players in each. Set up more boxes for more players. Have at least 10 yards in between additional boxes.

2 The session starts with three players passing the ball around in each of the squares using one or two touch.



3 On your cue, one player from each square runs with the ball across to the other square (It's a race). First one to get to the square wins a point for their team.

4 When they arrive with the ball, continue passing one or two touch waiting for the next cue.



5 You can add a defender in between the boxes to make it harder.

GAME PLAY
Control the ball when dribbling.
Accurate passing.
Speed is the winner.

How many players do I need?

You need at least six players.

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

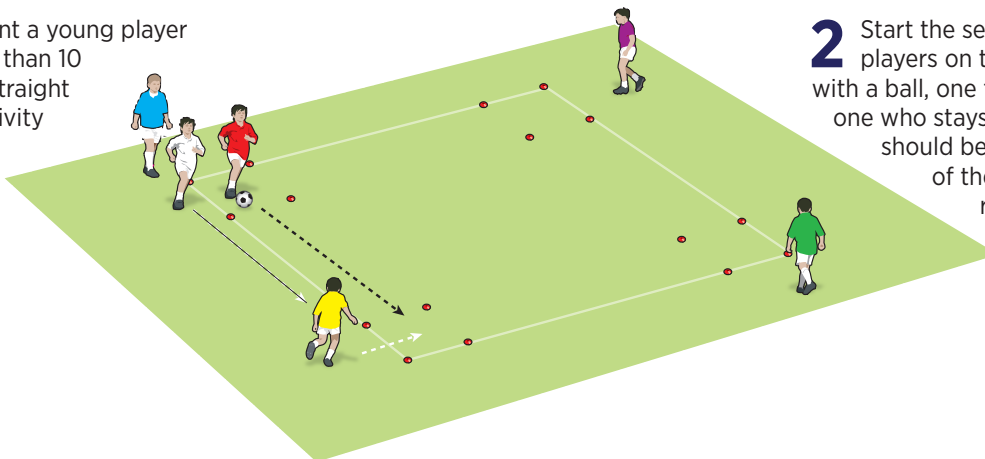
First touch control

ACTIVITY: REACT WITH SPEED

CALL OUT

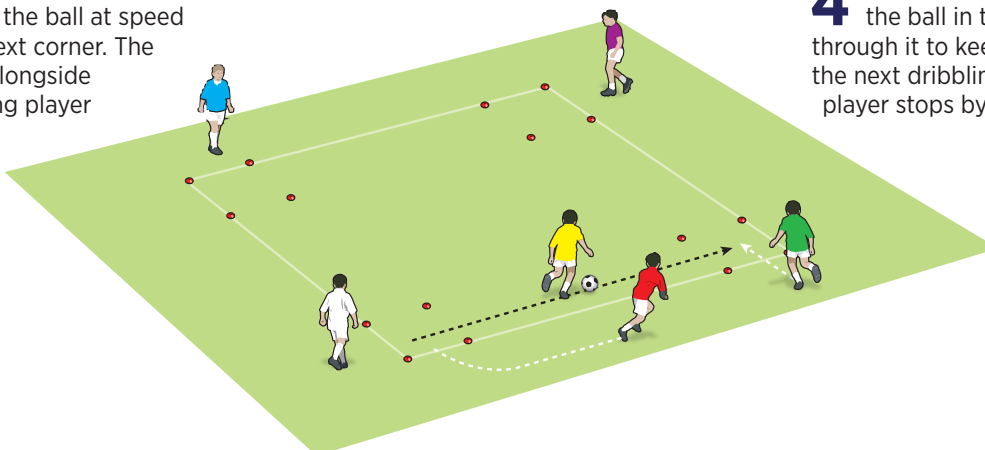
“Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Look up to see where to stop the ball” •
“Stop the ball in the box”

1 The longest sprint a young player will make is less than 10 yards and not in a straight line – so for this activity to work we use a square with one-yard boxes on each corner and with five yards between boxes.



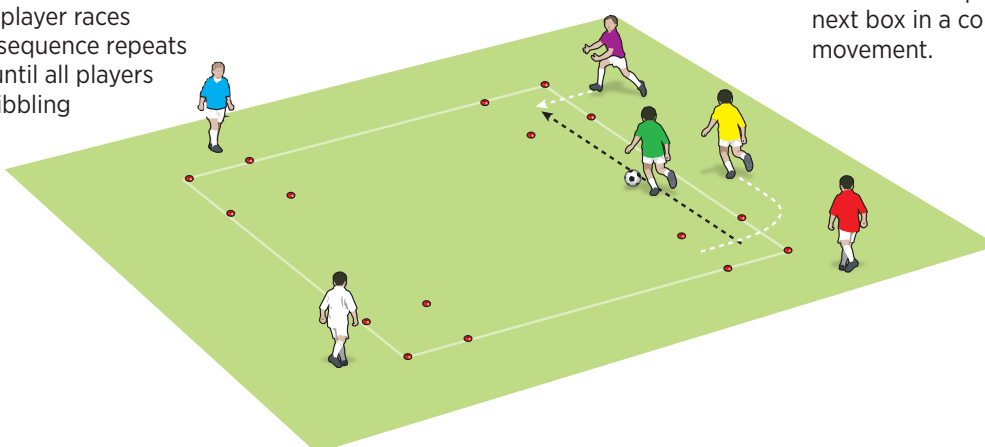
2 Start the session with three players on the first corner – one with a ball, one to race against and one who stays on the corner. There should be one player on each of the other corners, ready to pick up the incoming ball and dribble it to the next square.

3 When you say “go”, the first player dribbles the ball at speed to the box on the next corner. The racing player runs alongside putting the dribbling player under pressure.



4 The dribbling player must stop the ball in the square, running through it to keep out of the way of the next dribbling player. The racing player stops by the square.

5 The player on the corner then dribbles at speed to the next corner and the first player races alongside him. The sequence repeats around the square until all players have had a go at dribbling and racing.



6 This game is all about speed, with two players racing to the next box in a continuous sprint-rest movement.

How many players do I need?

We used six players in the session.

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

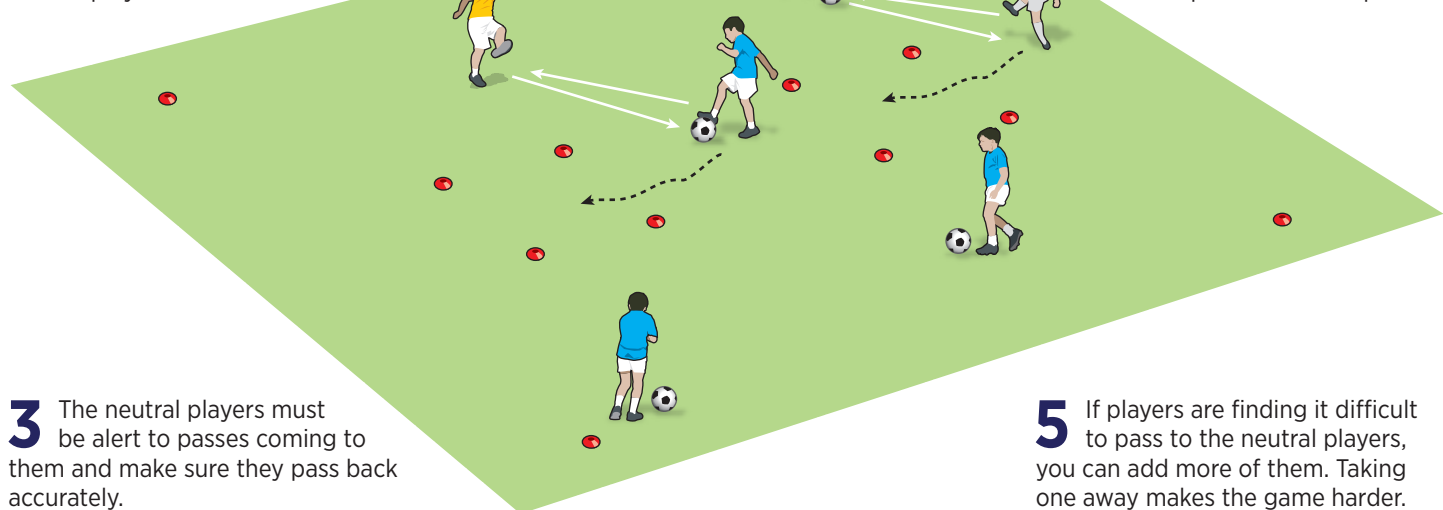
First touch control

GAME: CONTROL AND STOP

CALL OUT "Call for the ball" • "Keep your eyes on the ball" • "Use part of your body or the inside of the foot to cushion and stop the ball"

1 Set up a 15 x 15 yards area with two squares in the centre each measuring 2 x 2 yards. You need four working players with balls and two neutral players.

2 The working players dribble the balls around the area. They must play a one-two with a neutral player and then stop the ball in the square to score a point.

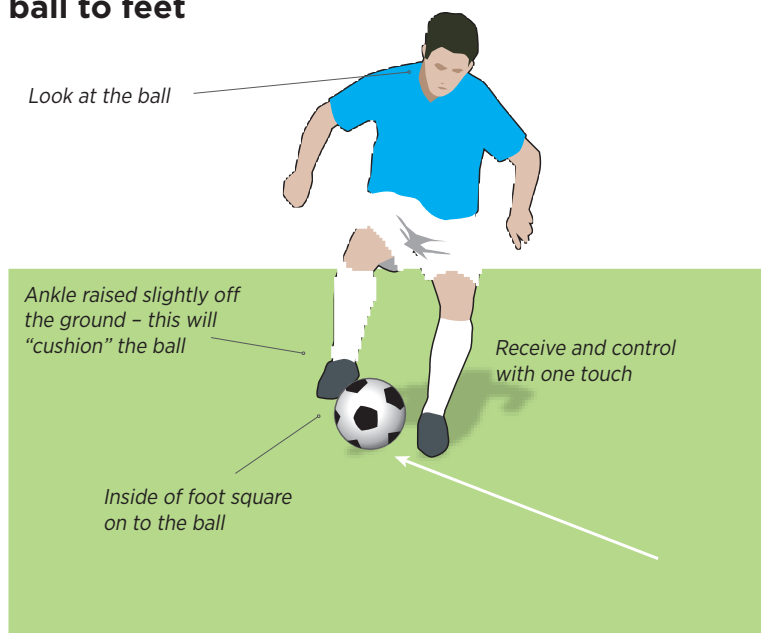


3 The neutral players must be alert to passes coming to them and make sure they pass back accurately.

5 If players are finding it difficult to pass to the neutral players, you can add more of them. Taking one away makes the game harder.

4 If you find some of the working players are waiting for the neutral players to spot them, tell them there is no standing still so they must keep moving.

Receiving the ball to feet



GAME PLAY
Players concentrate on dribbling, accurate passing and communication. Give players a point for every time they stop the ball in a box. The winner is the player with the most points at the end.

How many players do I need?

You need six players – four with balls and two neutral – although you can change the numbers to make it harder or easier, as required.

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

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U13

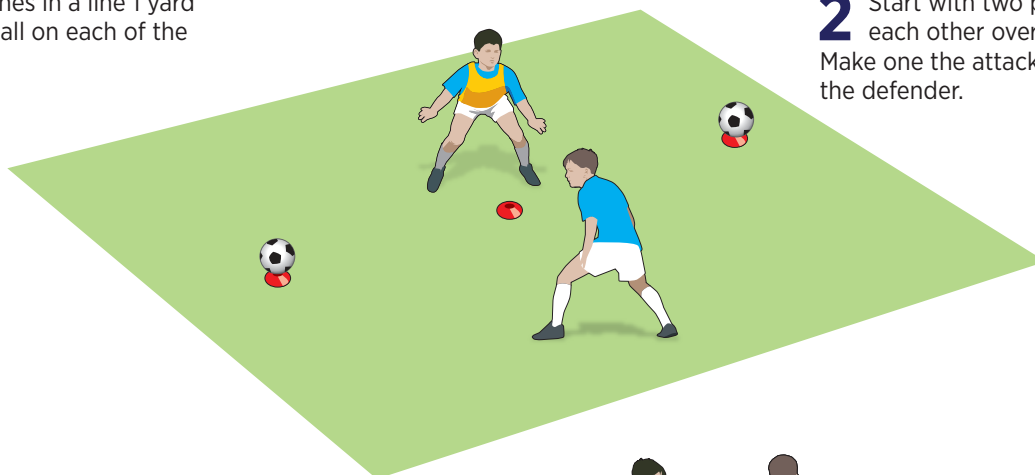
ATTACKING

Individual match day skills

ACTIVITY: MIRROR MOVEMENTS TO CONE

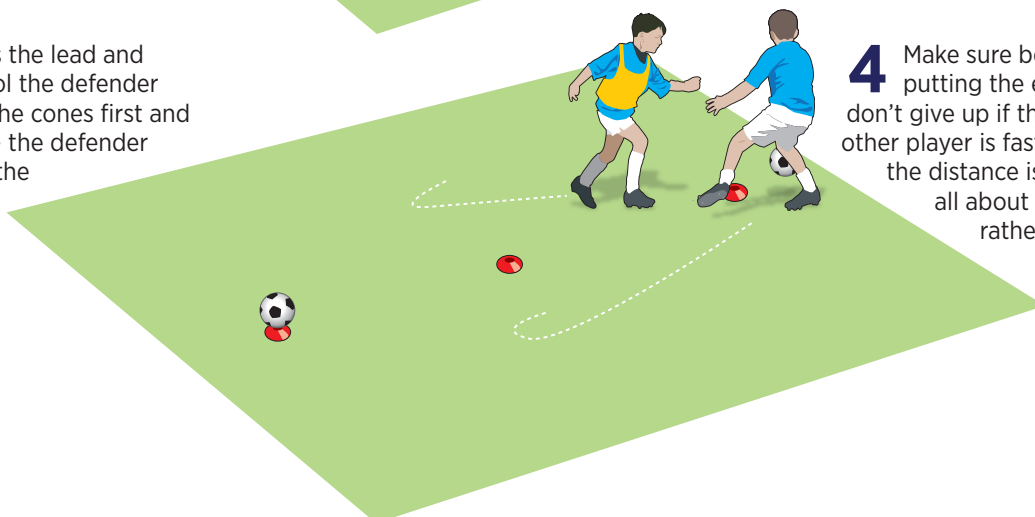
CALL OUT "Keep your balance" • "Trick your partner" • "Make a decision and go for the ball"

1 Set up three cones in a line 1 yard apart. Place a ball on each of the two end cones.



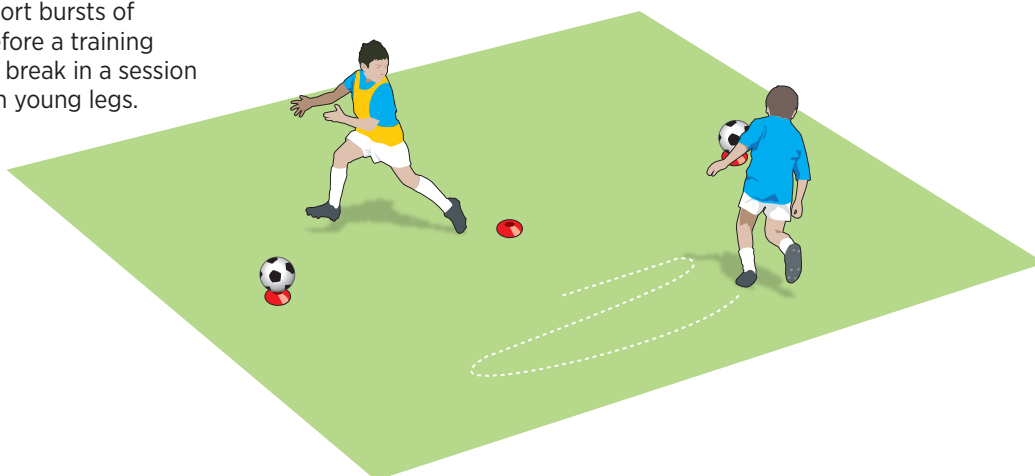
2 Start with two players facing each other over the middle cone. Make one the attacker and the other the defender.

3 The attacker is the lead and must try to fool the defender and get to one of the cones first and knock the ball off - the defender must try to mirror the movement and get there first.



4 Make sure both players are putting the effort in and don't give up if they think the other player is faster than them - the distance is small and it is all about clever movement rather than speed.

5 Run this for short bursts of 30 seconds before a training session or during a break in a session as it can be hard on young legs.



How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

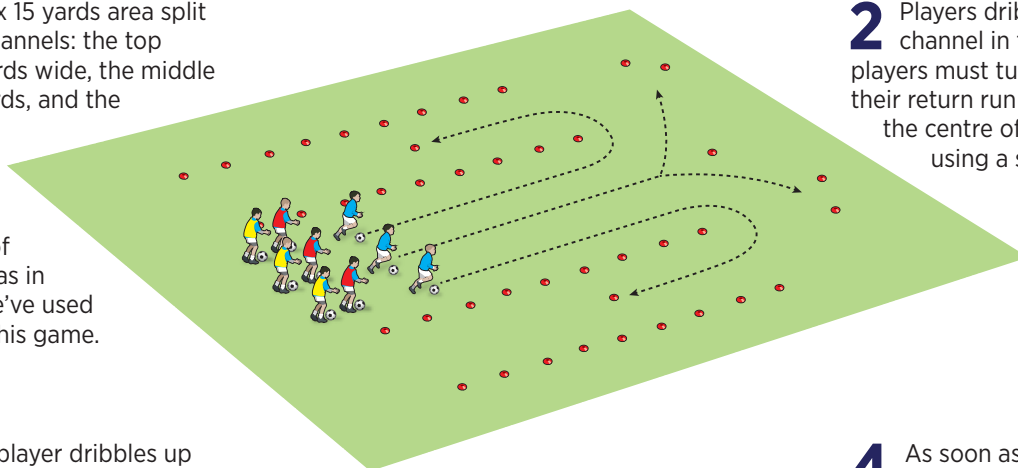
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

Individual match day skills

GAME: THE SKILLS CORRIDOR

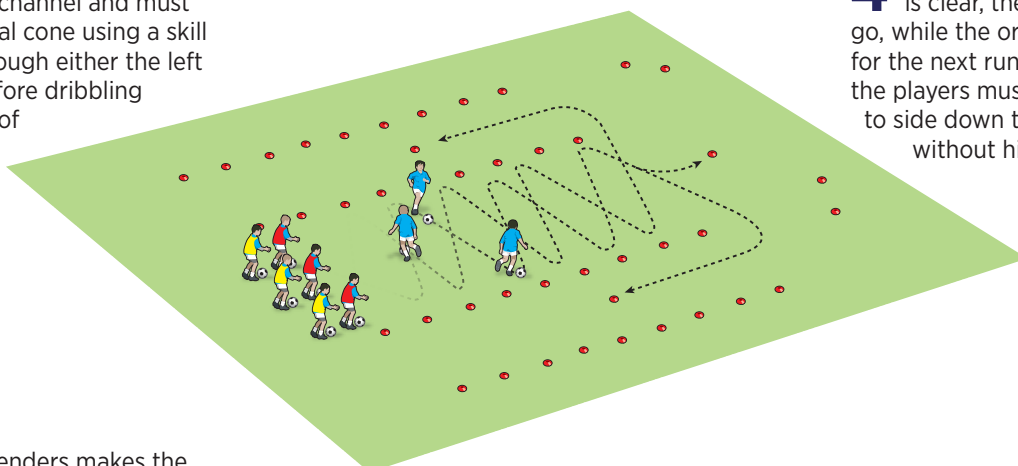
CALL OUT "Control the ball" • "Turn quickly" • "Get the ball out from under your feet"

1 Set up a 30 x 15 yards area split into three channels: the top channel is 10 yards wide, the middle channel is 15 yards, and the bottom channel is 5 yards. At the end of the middle channel place a couple of two-yard gates as in the diagram. We've used nine players in this game.



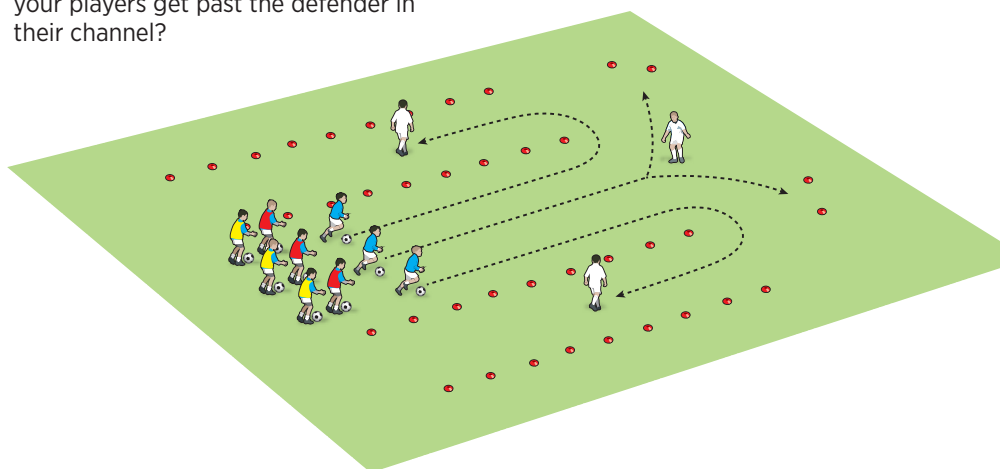
2 Players dribble up the middle channel in threes. The two outer players must turn the corner and on their return run "beat" the cone in the centre of the outside channels using a skill.

3 The centre player dribbles up the middle channel and must "beat" the central cone using a skill and then go through either the left or right gate before dribbling back down one of the outer channels.



4 As soon as the middle channel is clear, the next wave of players go, while the original players queue for the next run. In the next run the players must take the ball side to side down the central channel without hitting each other.

5 Adding defenders makes the game more realistic - can any of your players get past the defender in their channel?



GAME PLAY

Good ball control in the first part. Dribbling technique is important through the poles. Shoot with accuracy.

How many players do I need?

I used nine players for the game, but you can line up groups of three as necessary or use one group to be defenders.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U13 | ATTACKING 2

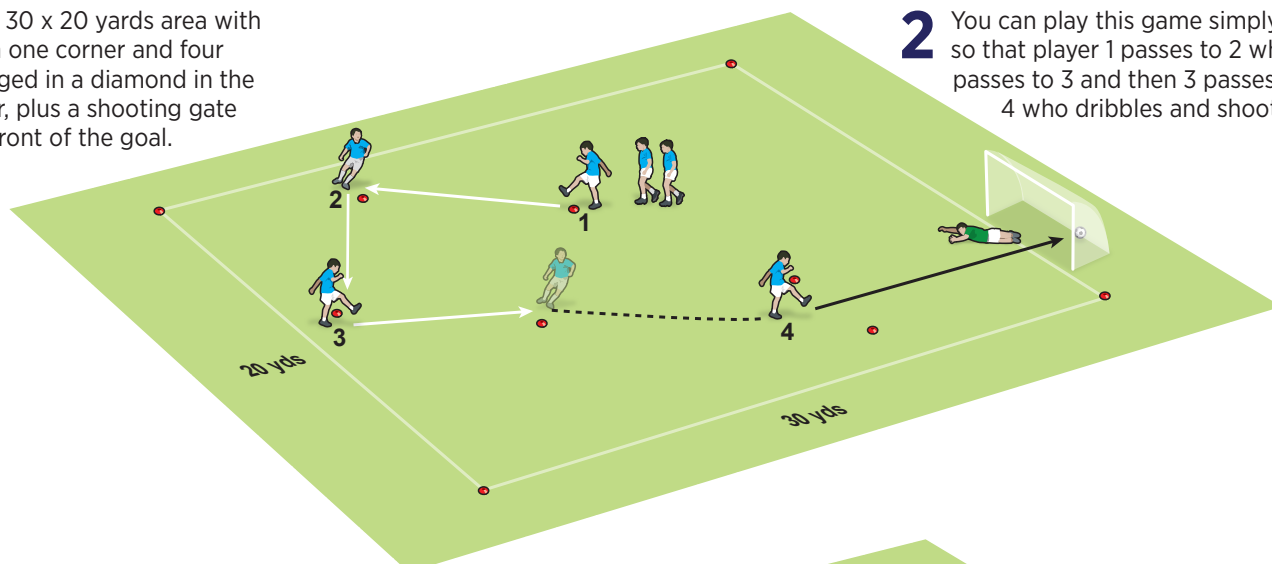
Pass, dribble and shoot

ACTIVITY: SUPPORT THE STRIKER

CALL OUT

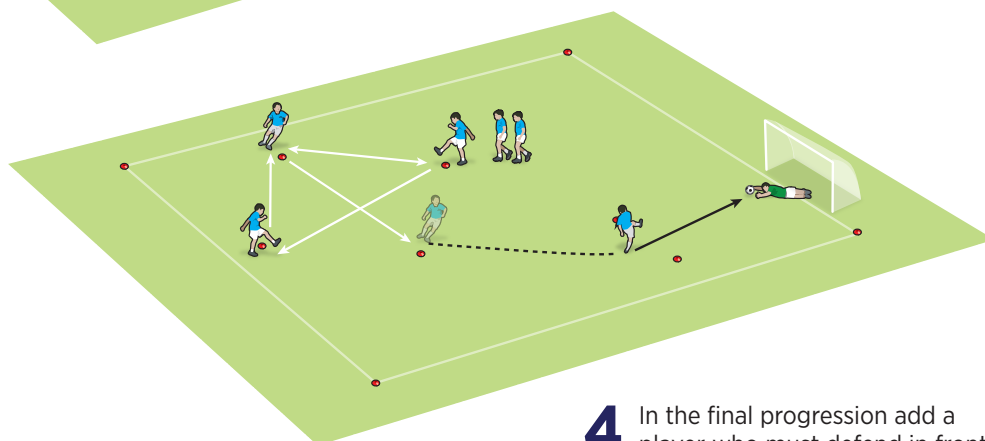
“Good first touch” • “Keep the ball in front of you” • “Check where the ball is and cover movement” • “Accuracy over power” • “Accurate passing”

1 Set up a 30 x 20 yards area with a goal in one corner and four cones arranged in a diamond in the other corner, plus a shooting gate 12 yards in front of the goal.



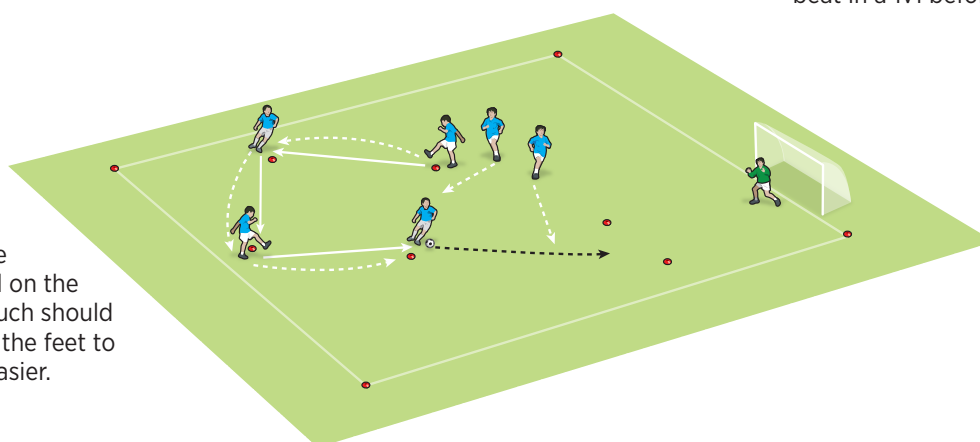
2 You can play this game simply so that player 1 passes to 2 who passes to 3 and then 3 passes to 4 who dribbles and shoots.

3 Or play it a bit more complicated – player 1 passes to 2 who sets back to 1 to pass to player 3. Player 3 sets back to 2 who passes to player 4 to dribble and shoot.



4 In the final progression add a player who must defend in front of the gates that the attacker must beat in a 1v1 before shooting.

5 Players should be receiving the ball on the back foot and first touch should get it out from under the feet to make the next pass easier.



How many players do I need?

You need seven players for this activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement

U13 | ATTACKING 2

Pass, dribble and shoot

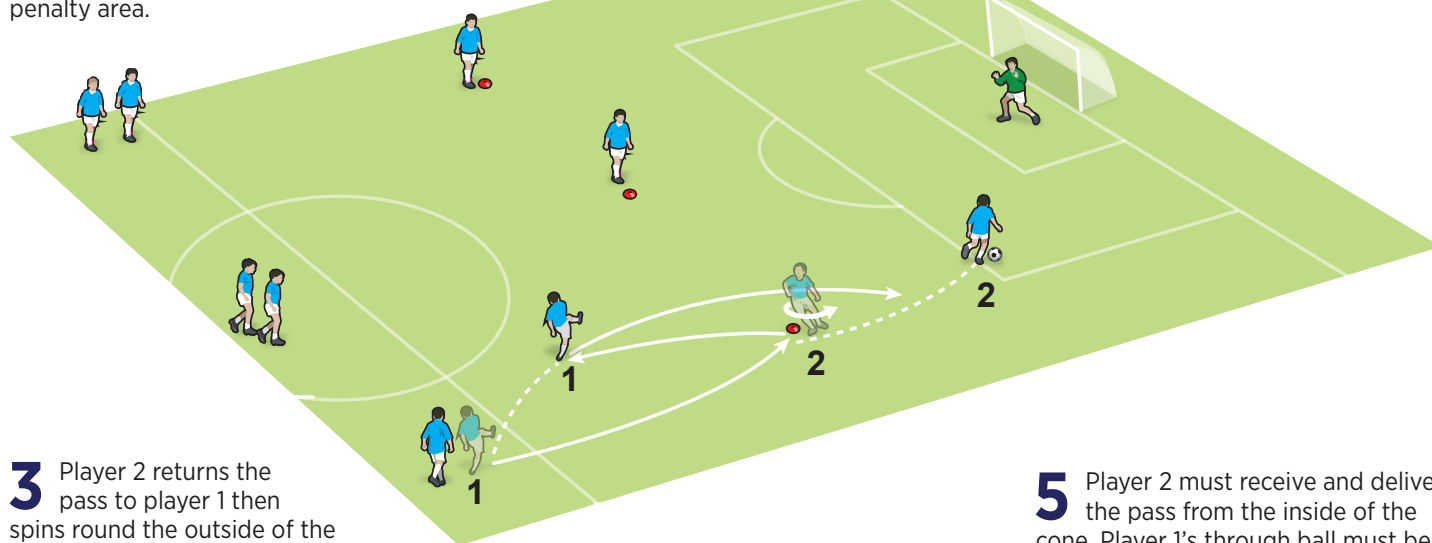
GAME: SPIN AND SCORE

CALL OUT

“Good first touch” • “Keep the ball in front of you” • “Check where the ball is and cover movement” • “Accuracy over power” • “Accurate passing”

1 Set up using half your normal 11v11 pitch – players are working in three sets from behind the halfway line with another player midway between the halfway line and penalty area.

2 Play starts with player 1 making a pass into player 2 in each of the three set ups – player 2 would use the turn to beat a defender in a match.

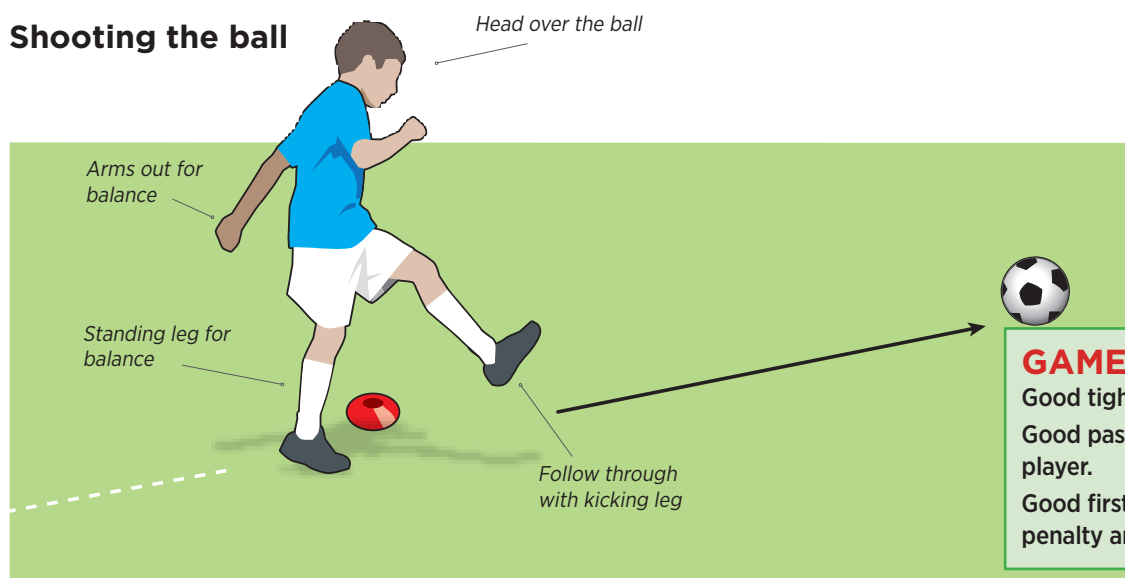


3 Player 2 returns the pass to player 1 then spins round the outside of the defender (cone) to take a second pass from player 1 which is played for player 2 to run on to.

4 Player 2 dribbles into the penalty area and shoots at the goal.

5 Player 2 must receive and deliver the pass from the inside of the cone. Player 1's through ball must be on the inside of the cone while player 2 spins away to the outside, turning left then straightening up. Player 2's through ball must be firmly hit but accurate.

Shooting the ball



GAME PLAY

Good tight turn to receive the pass.
Good pass in front of the turning player.
Good first touch to dribble into the penalty area.

How many players do I need?

You need 10 players for this game.

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

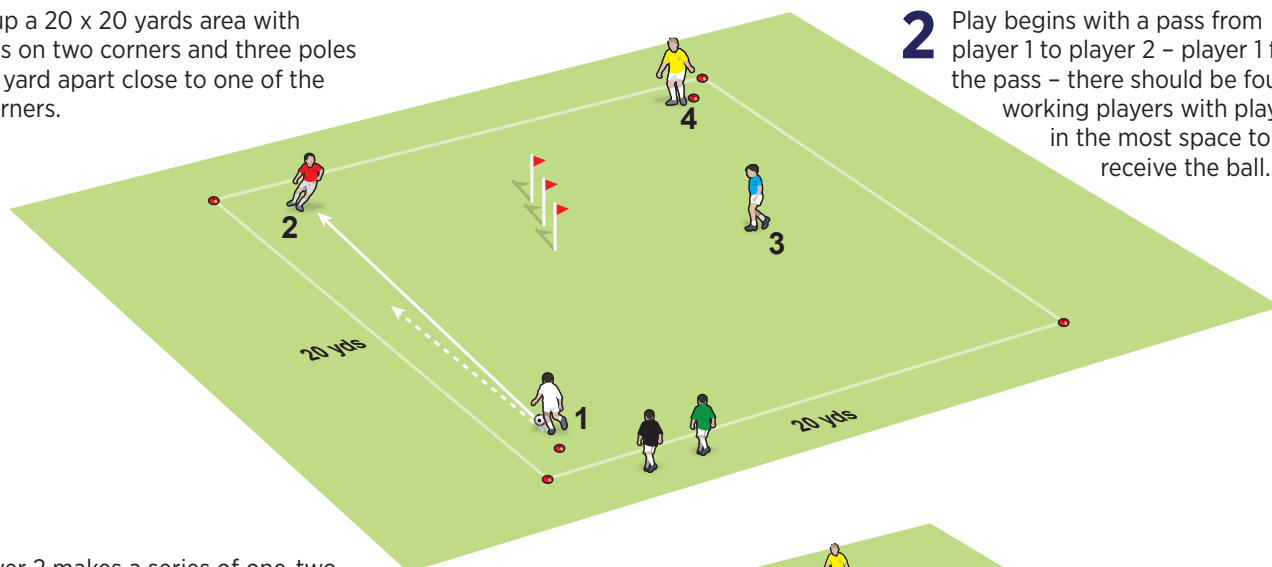
Attacking build up play

ACTIVITY: PASSING TECHNIQUE

CALL OUT

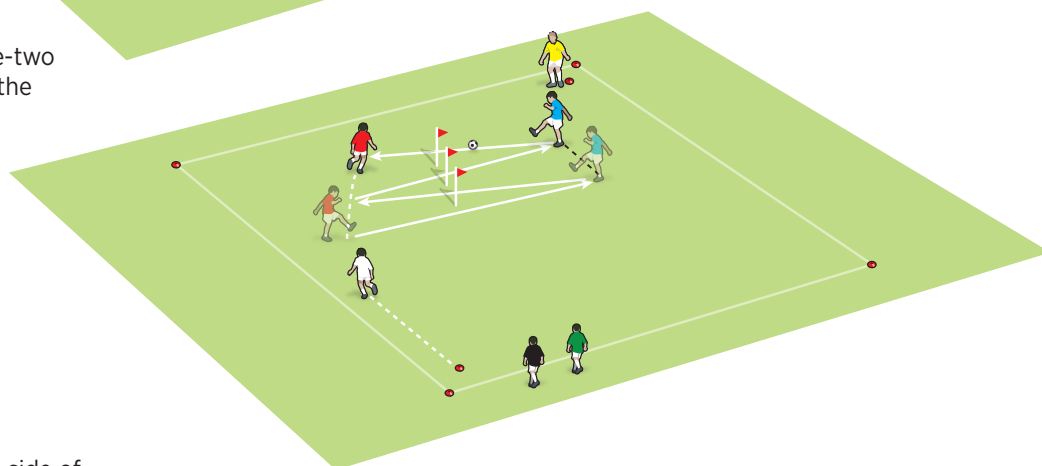
“Look at the player you are passing to” • “Good first touch to get the ball out of your feet” • “Look where you are passing” • “Move to receive the pass”

1 Set up a 20 x 20 yards area with cones on two corners and three poles placed 1 yard apart close to one of the other corners.

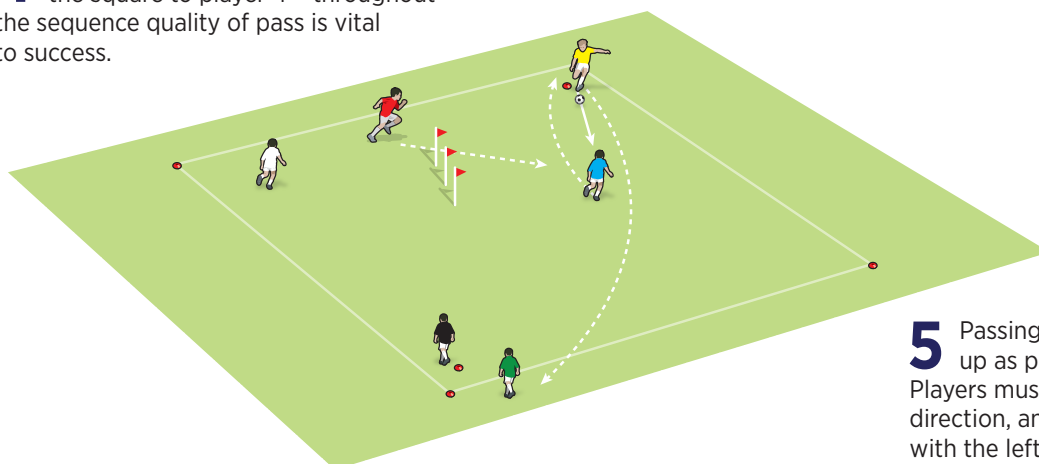


2 Play begins with a pass from player 1 to player 2 – player 1 follows the pass – there should be four working players with player 3 in the most space to receive the ball.

3 Player 2 makes a series of one-two passes with player 3 through the flags in sequence.



4 Now the ball is passed up the side of the square to player 4 – throughout the sequence quality of pass is vital to success.



5 Passing should be slow at first, then sped up as players get used to the movement. Players must pass with good pace and direction, and should be comfortable working with the left or right foot.

How many players do I need?

We used six players in this activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement

U13 | ATTACKING 3

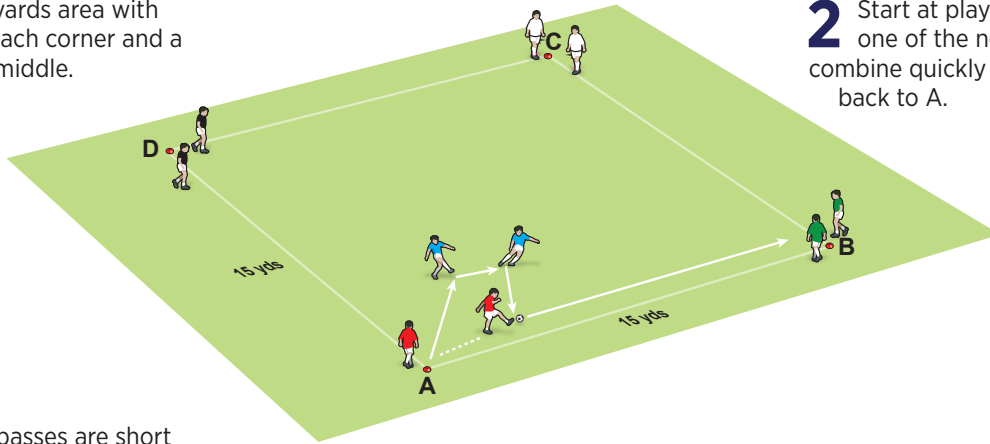
Attacking build up play

GAME: SHORT, SHORT, LONG PASSES

CALL OUT

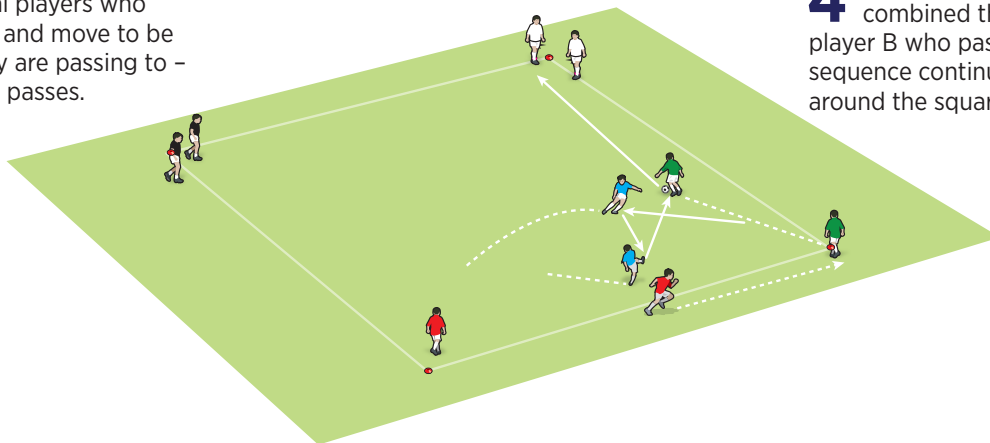
“Look at the player you are passing to” • “Good first touch to get the ball out of your feet” • “Look where you are passing” • “Move to receive the pass”

1 Set up a 15 x 15 yards area with two players on each corner and a working pair in the middle.



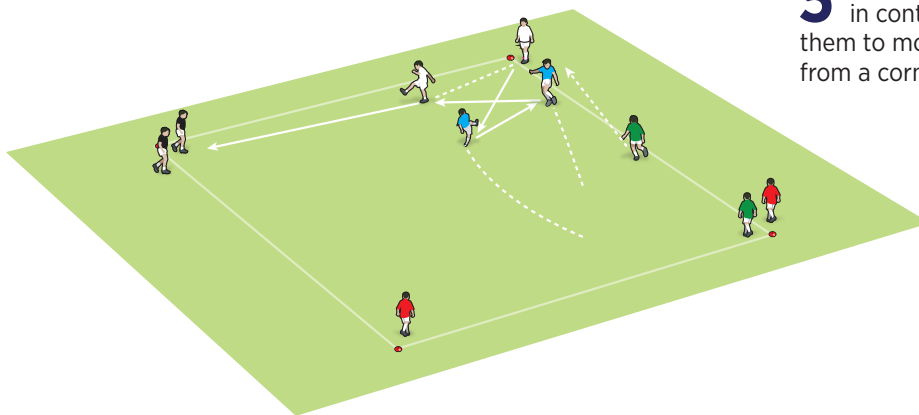
2 Start at player A who passes to one of the neutral players – they combine quickly and pass the ball back to A.

3 The first set of passes are short – now player A must make a longer pass to player B. Player B passes to the neutral players who must follow the ball and move to be close to the player they are passing to – they make the short passes.



4 When the neutrals have combined they pass back to player B who passes long to C. The sequence continues in this way around the square.

5 Watch to make sure the two neutral players stay in contact and communicate their positions. Get them to move so each one receives the first pass from a corner player.



GAME PLAY
Good tight turn to receive the pass.
Good pass in front of the turning player.
Good first touch to dribble into the penalty area.

How many players do I need?

You will need 10 players for this game.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement

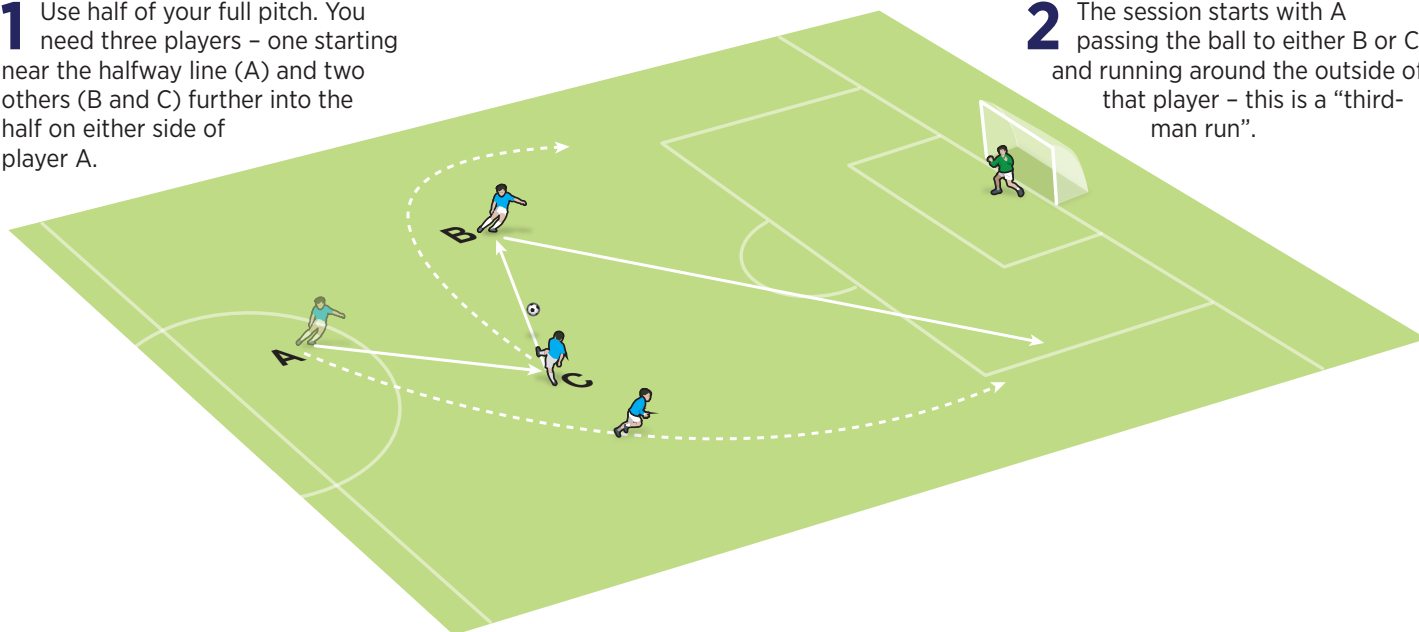
Penetrate the final third

ACTIVITY: THIRD MAN RUNNING

CALL OUT

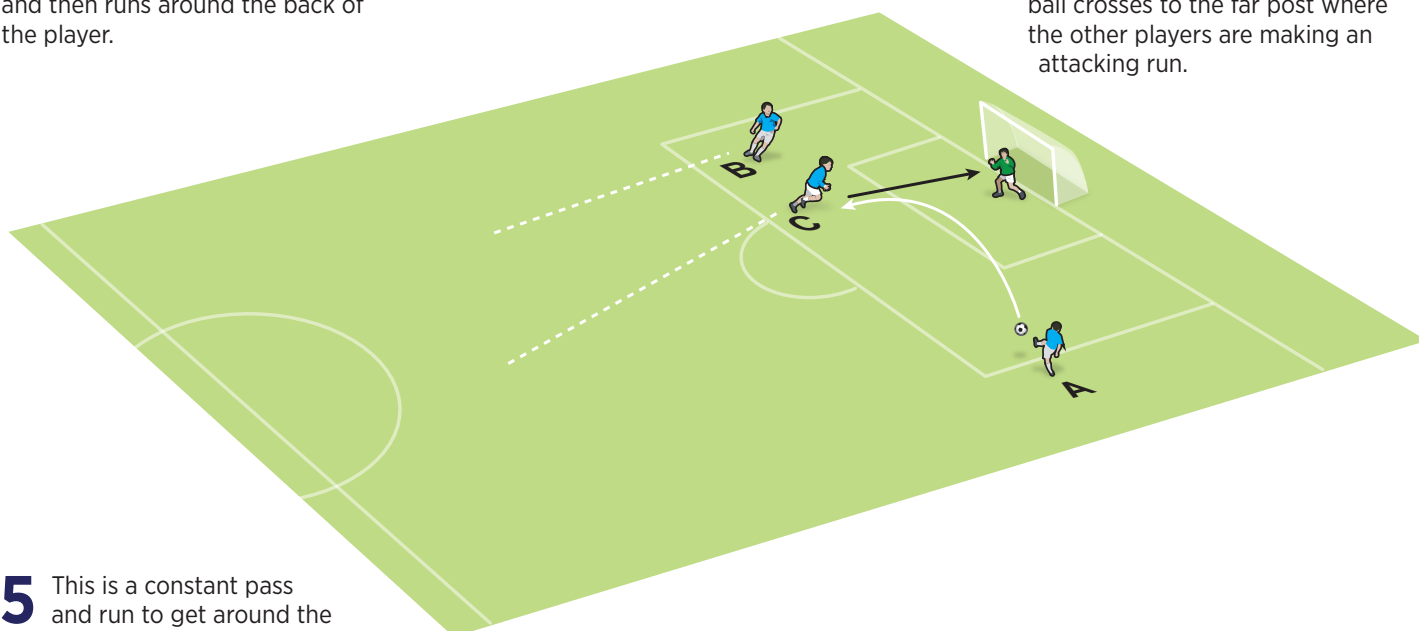
“Accuracy is important” • “Good first touch” • “Look where you are passing” •
“Move to receive the pass”

1 Use half of your full pitch. You need three players - one starting near the halfway line (A) and two others (B and C) further into the half on either side of player A.



2 The session starts with A passing the ball to either B or C and running around the outside of that player - this is a “third-man run”.

3 The receiving player passes to the other player first time and then runs around the back of the player.



4 After a minimum of three passes, the player with the ball crosses to the far post where the other players are making an attacking run.

5 This is a constant pass and run to get around the outside of the player with the ball. A great way to warm up before a match.

How many players do I need?

Each set up uses four players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U13 | ATTACKING 4

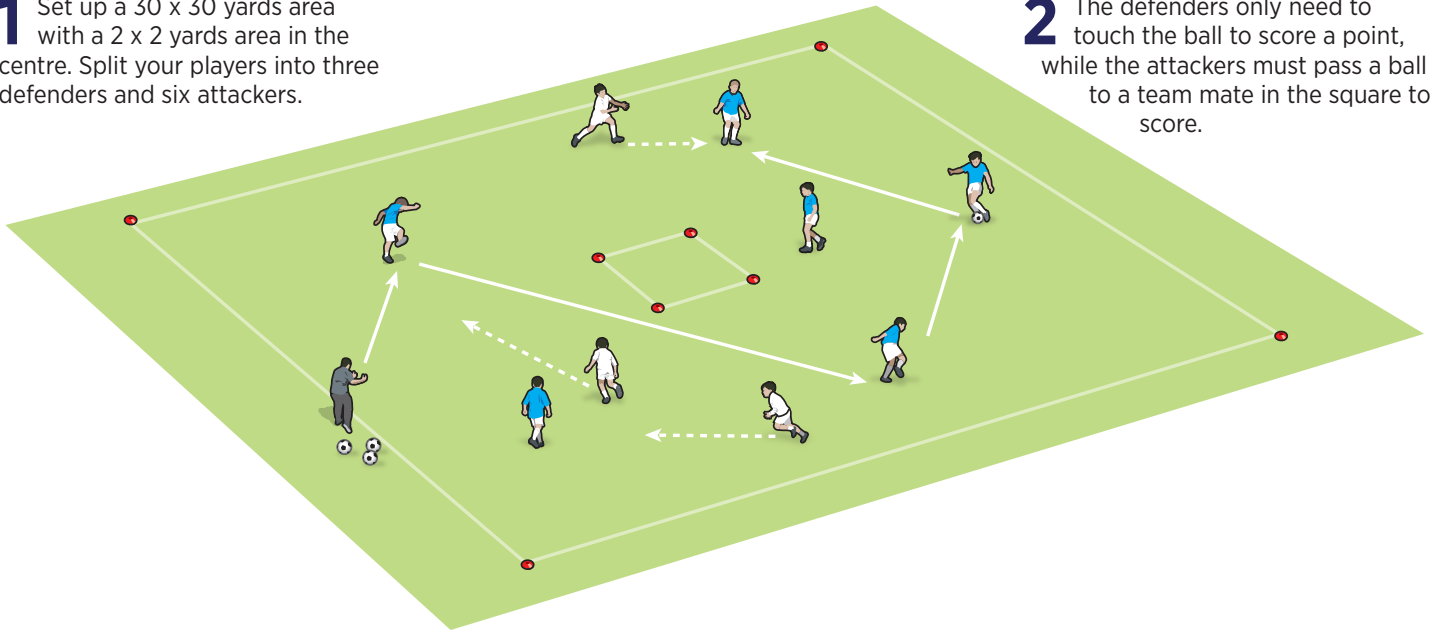
Penetrate the final third

GAME: THE KILLER PASS

CALL OUT

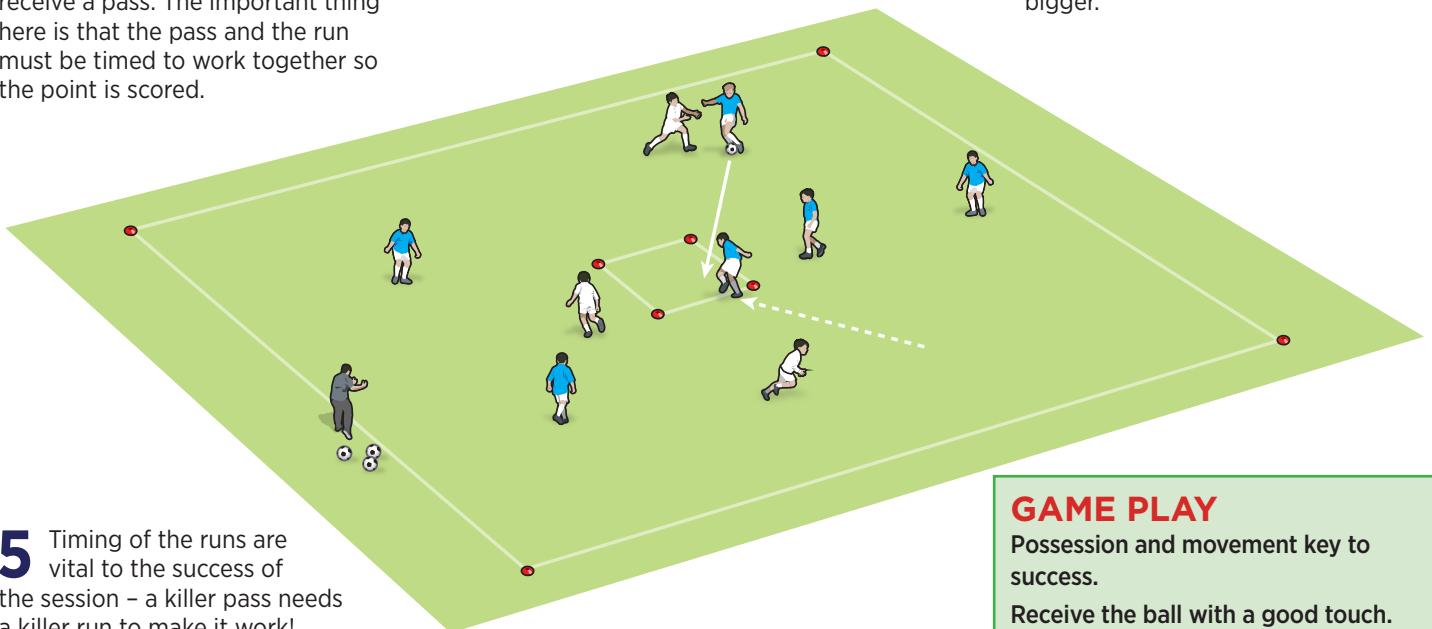
“Look at the player you are passing to” • “Good first touch” • “Look up before you shoot” • “Time your runs into the box”

1 Set up a 30 x 30 yards area with a 2 x 2 yards area in the centre. Split your players into three defenders and six attackers.



2 The defenders only need to touch the ball to score a point, while the attackers must pass a ball to a team mate in the square to score.

3 Players cannot wait in the square, they can only go there to receive a pass. The important thing here is that the pass and the run must be timed to work together so the point is scored.



4 If the players struggle to make the pass, make the square bigger.

5 Timing of the runs are vital to the success of the session – a killer pass needs a killer run to make it work!

GAME PLAY

Possession and movement key to success.
Receive the ball with a good touch.
Have plenty of balls and helpers to retrieve them.

How many players do I need?

I used nine players for the session.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

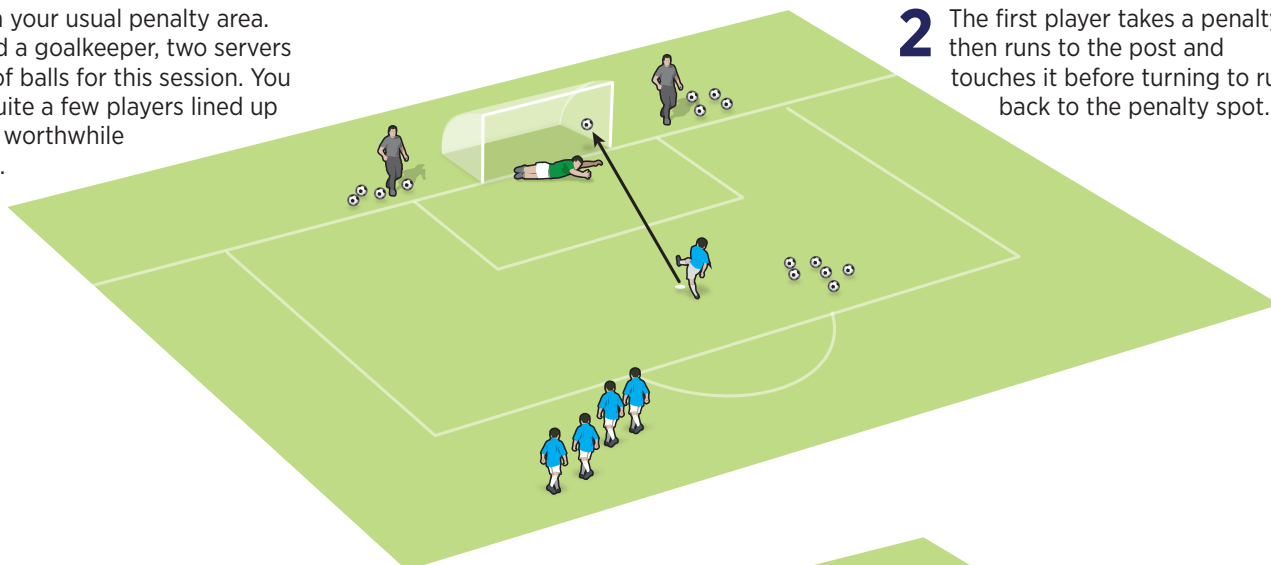
Score a goal

ACTIVITY: IT'S A KNOCKOUT

CALL OUT

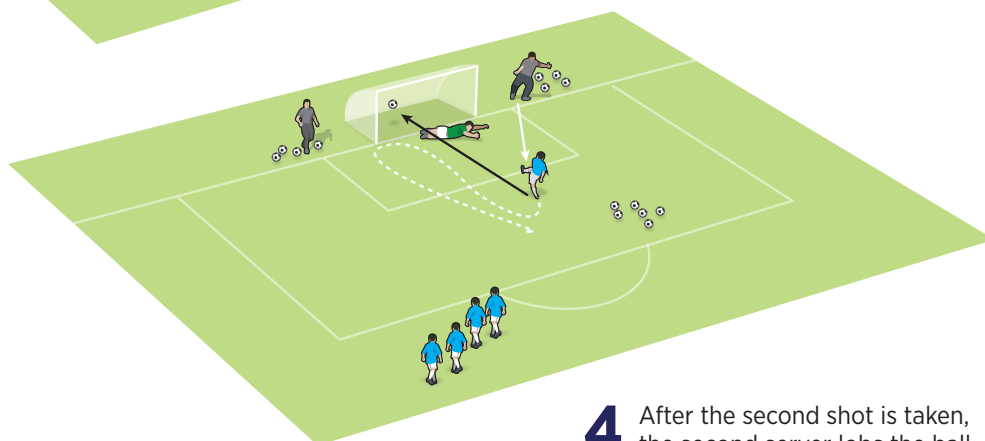
“Accuracy is important” • “Good first touch” • “Look where you are passing” • “Move to receive the pass”

1 Set up in your usual penalty area. You need a goalkeeper, two servers and plenty of balls for this session. You also need quite a few players lined up to make it a worthwhile competition.



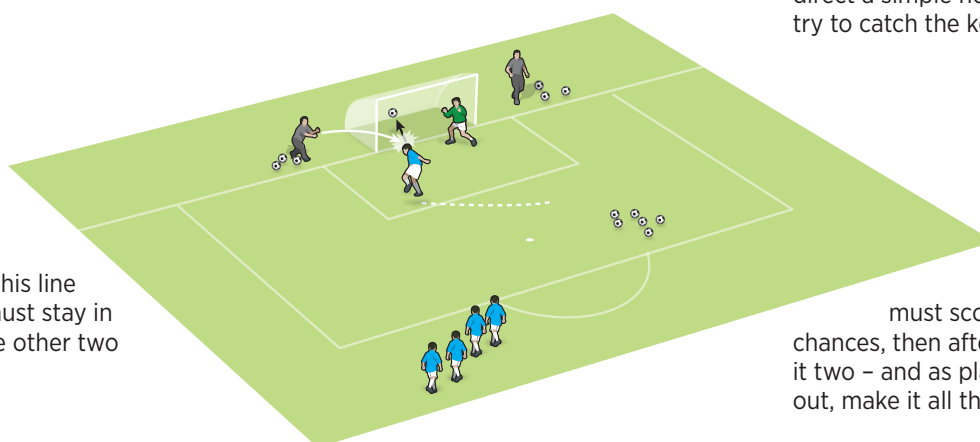
2 The first player takes a penalty then runs to the post and touches it before turning to run back to the penalty spot.

3 A server times a pass into the penalty area for the returning player to run on to and shoot on the turn.



4 After the second shot is taken, the second server lobs the ball up and the running player must direct a simple header at the goal to try to catch the keeper out.

5 The goalkeeper cannot move off his line for the penalty and must stay in the 6-yard box for the other two chances.



6 At first, players must score with one of the chances, then after round one make it two – and as players are knocked out, make it all three chances.

How many players do I need?

Players work as individuals, but the more you have, the more interesting the competition will be.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
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	--->	—>

U13 | ATTACKING 5

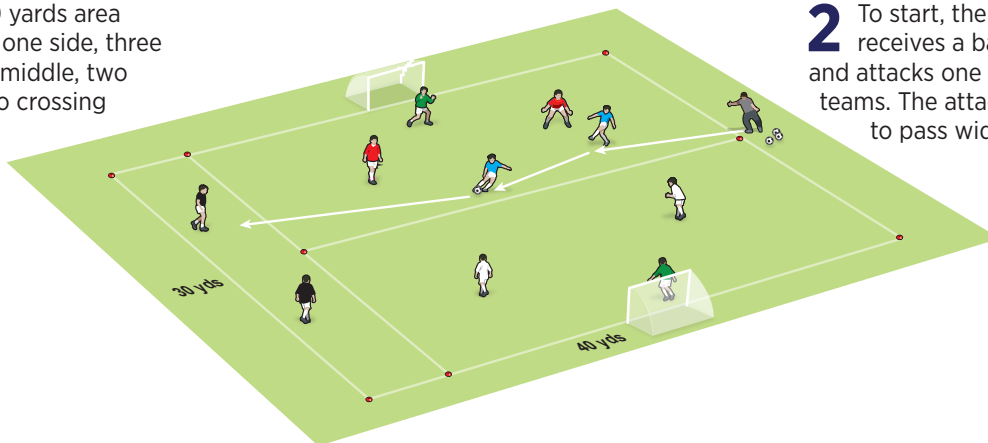
Score a goal

GAME: OVERLOADS IN ATTACK

CALL OUT

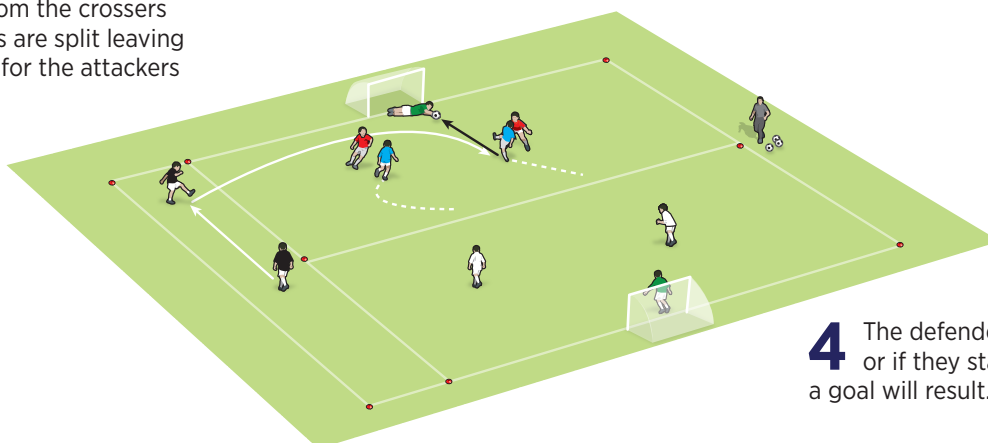
“Accuracy is important” • “Good first touch” • “Look where you are passing” • “Move to receive the pass”

1 Set up a 40 x 30 yards area with a server on one side, three teams of two in the middle, two goalkeepers and two crossing players in a 5-yard channel on the opposite side to the server.



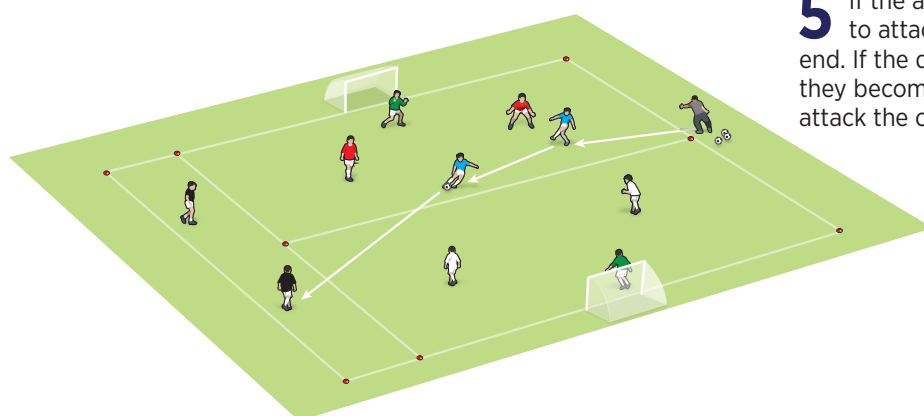
2 To start, the middle team receives a ball from the server and attacks one of the other two teams. The attackers must combine to pass wide to the crossers.

3 The aim is for the attacking pair to get into a position to score from a return ball from the crossers – here the defenders are split leaving space in the middle for the attackers to exploit.



4 The defenders MUST stay tight or if they stand off the attacker a goal will result.

5 If the attackers score, they get to attack the team at the other end. If the defenders prevent a goal, they become the attacking team and attack the other end.



GAME PLAY

Play at a good tempo.

Understanding of the rules important.

Good first touch, good shooting.

How many players do I need?

You will need 10 players for this game.

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

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U13

DEFENDING

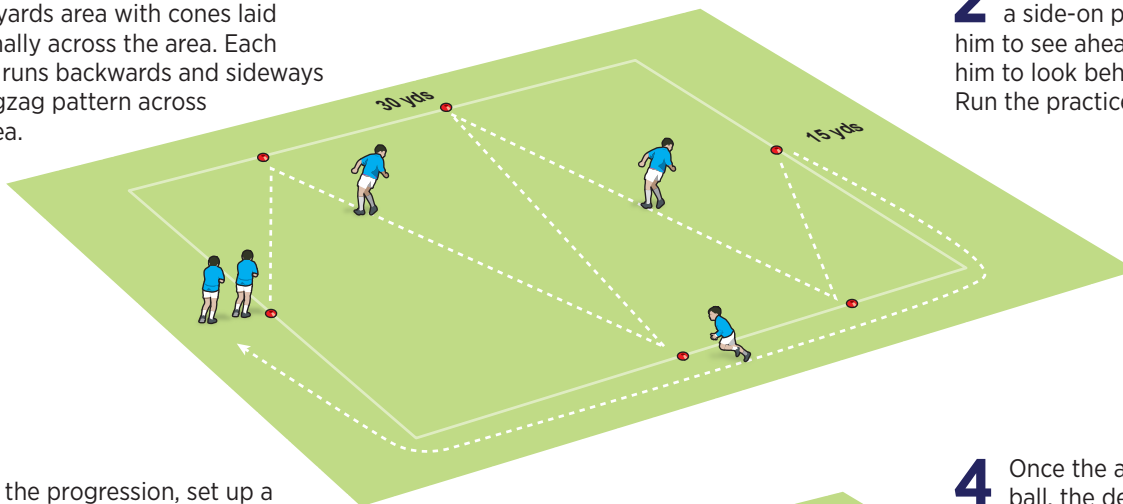
Individual technique for recovery

ACTIVITY: DYNAMIC MOVEMENT

CALL OUT

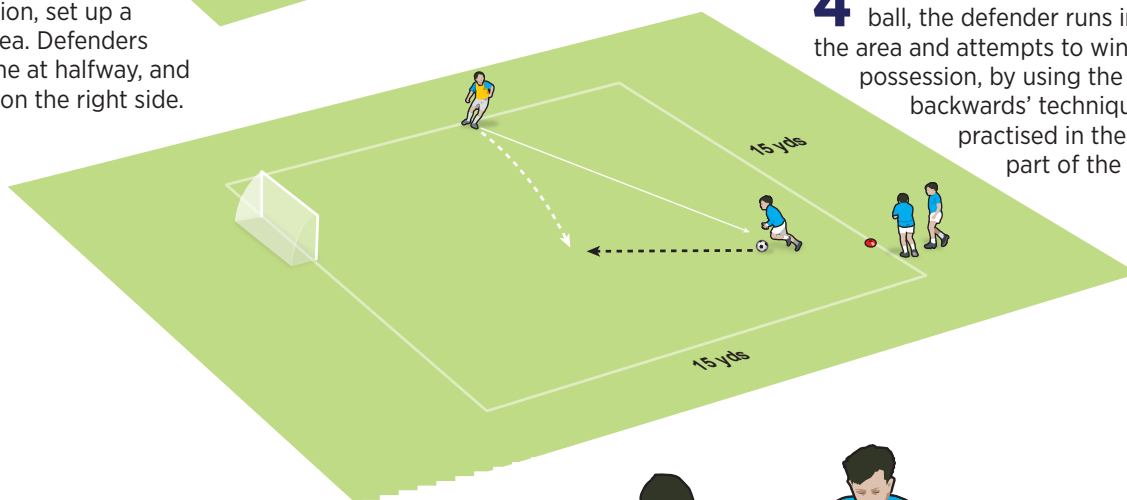
“Look behind you to see where you are running” • “Watch your angles” • “Check where the ball is and cover movement”

1 For the first part set up a 30 x 15 yards area with cones laid diagonally across the area. Each player runs backwards and sideways in a zigzag pattern across the area.



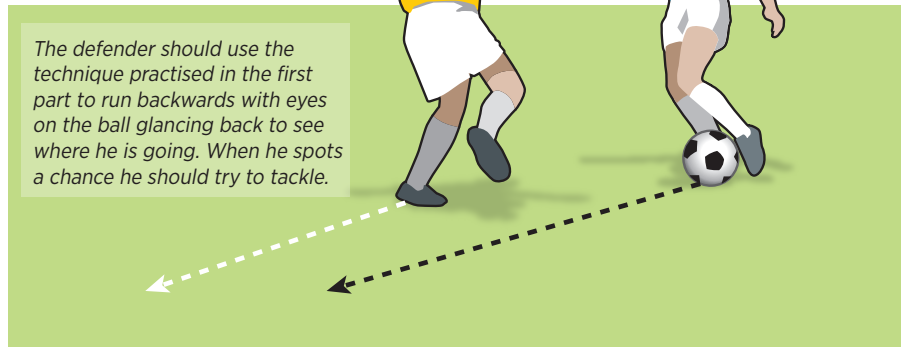
2 Each player must always have a side-on position that enables him to see ahead while also allowing him to look behind to assess danger. Run the practice for 10 minutes.

3 In the progression, set up a 15 x 15 yards area. Defenders start on the touchline at halfway, and pass to an attacker on the right side.



4 Once the attacker touches the ball, the defender runs into the area and attempts to win back possession, by using the 'running backwards' technique practised in the first part of the activity.

5 Players show the attacker outside and away from goal by positioning his body between the goal and the defender. Play for 10 minutes.



How many players do I need?

We used five players for this activity.

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

U13 | DEFENDING 1

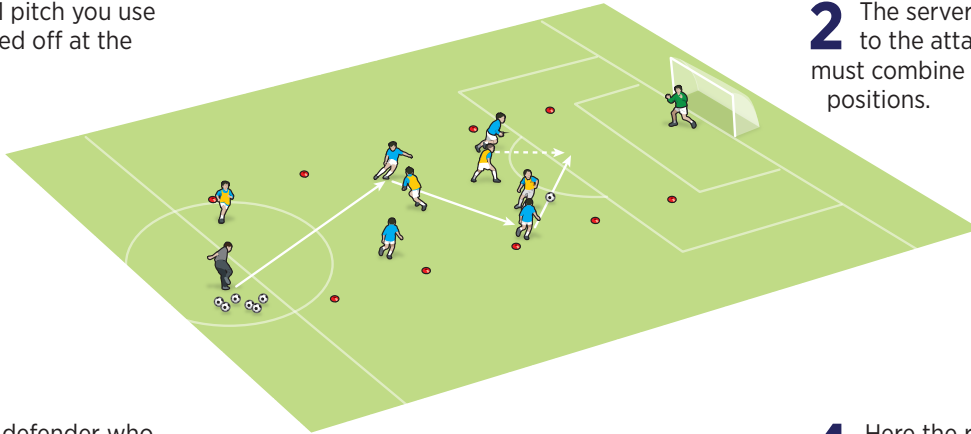
Individual technique for recovery

GAME: DYNAMIC MOVEMENT

CALL OUT

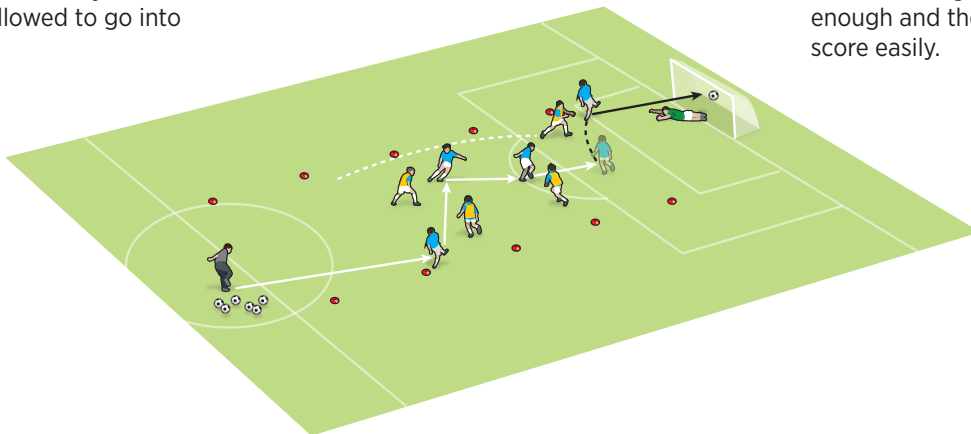
“Look behind you to see where you are running” • “Watch your angles” • “Check where the ball is and cover movement”

1 Use half the 11v11 pitch you use for matches coned off at the 6-yard box.



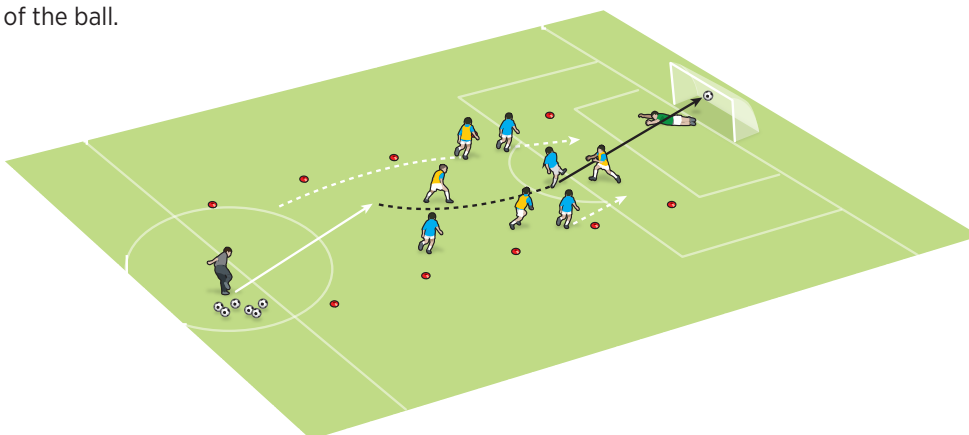
2 The server plays a ball out to the attacking team, who must combine to get into shooting positions.

3 The recovering defender who has run from the halfway line is the only defender allowed to go into the penalty area.



4 Here the recovering defender has not got back quickly enough and the opposition can score easily.

5 The defenders have played better here but you want the recovering defender to be in front of the ball.



GAME PLAY
Fast recovery by the defender.
Close off passing options.
Allow your team mate to recover.

How many players do I need?
We used nine players and a server in this game.

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

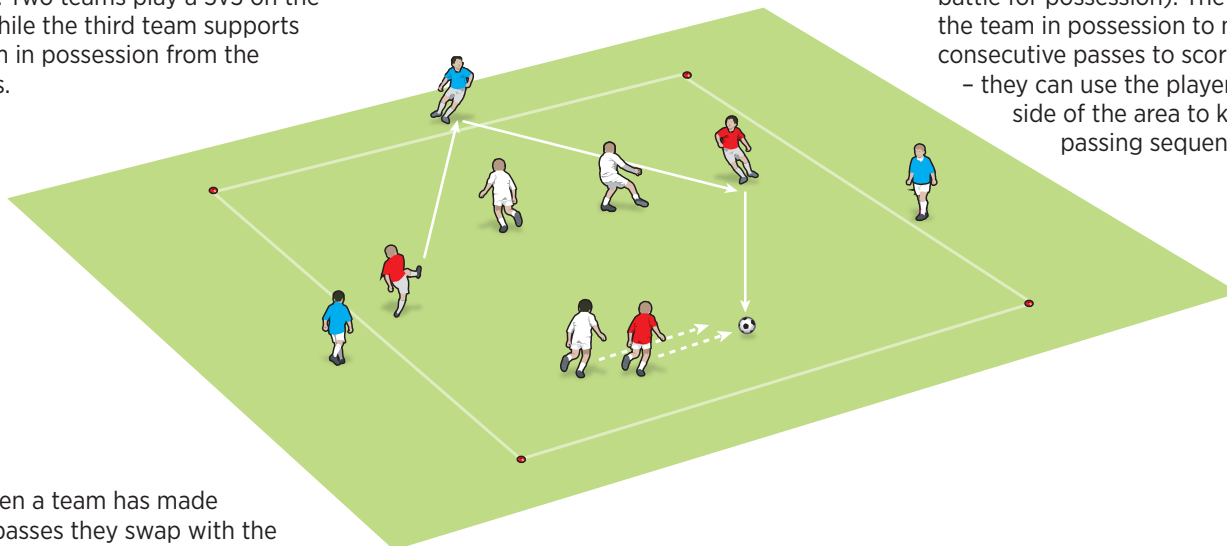
Full pitch pressure to win the ball

ACTIVITY: 6V3 COMBINATIONS

CALL OUT

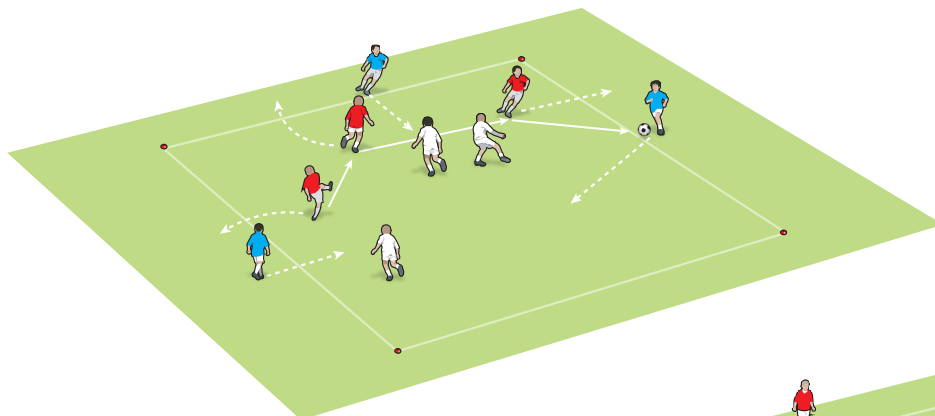
“Close down quickly” • “Don’t commit until you see a good chance to win the ball” • “Try and force a mistake” • “Win the ball”

1 Mark out a 16 x 16 yards area. Split the players into three teams of three. Two teams play a 3v3 on the pitch, while the third team supports the team in possession from the sidelines.



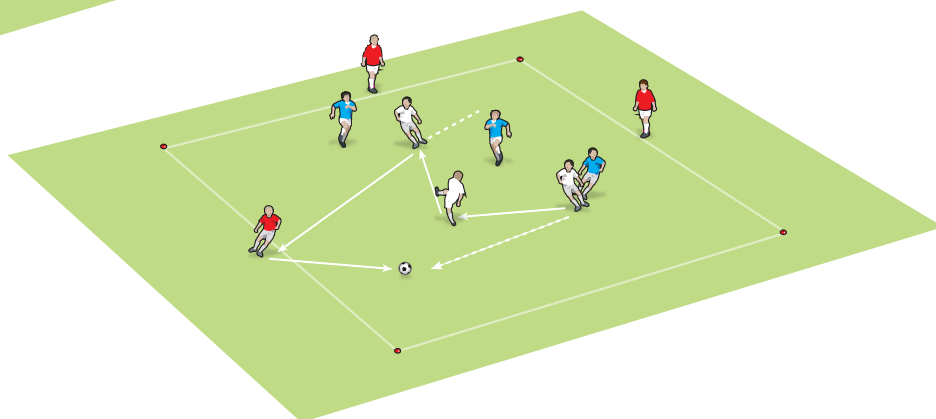
2 Start by giving one team the ball (or throw the ball in and let them battle for possession). The aim is for the team in possession to make 10 consecutive passes to score a point – they can use the players on the side of the area to keep the passing sequence going.

3 When a team has made 10 passes they swap with the team on the outside of the pitch and become support players.



4 The defending team has to work hard to stop the other team getting 10 passes. Make sure you change the defending team often.

5 The defenders should win the ball before the 10 passes have been completed. Experiment with the number of passes to make it easier or harder for the passing team.



How many players do I need?

You need nine players for this activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U13 | DEFENDING 2

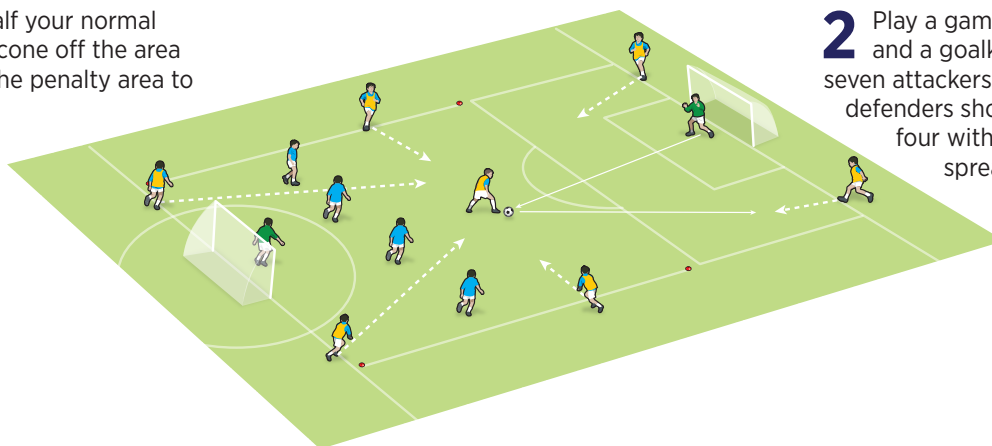
Full pitch pressure to win the ball

GAME: DEFENDING OVERLOADS

CALL OUT

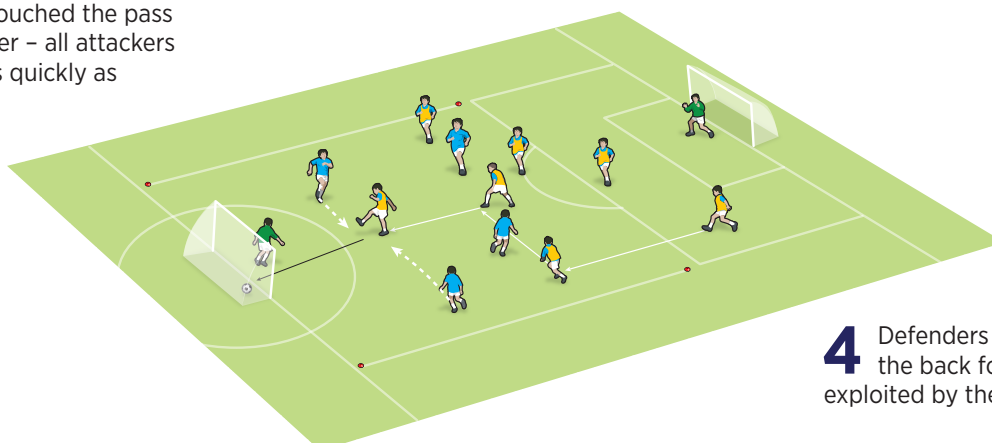
“Close down quickly” • “Don’t commit until you see a good chance to win the ball” • “Try and force a mistake” • “Win the ball” • “Counter-attack quickly”

1 Set up using half your normal 11v11 pitch and cone off the area from the edge of the penalty area to the halfway line.



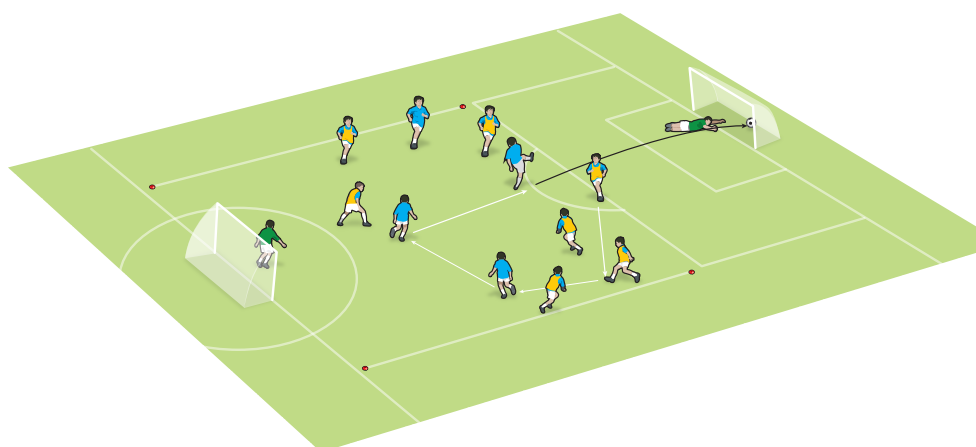
2 Play a game with four defenders and a goalkeeper against seven attackers and a keeper. The defenders should be in a back four with the attackers spread around the area supporting one central attacker.

3 Play begins when the central attacker has touched the pass from the goalkeeper – all attackers must get inside as quickly as possible.



4 Defenders must close tight in the back four or any gaps will be exploited by the overload.

5 Quick play by the defenders and tight pressing can create mistakes giving the defenders a chance to counter-attack.



GAME PLAY

Get tight in the back four.

Force play wide.

React quickly before the attackers are inside.

How many players do I need?

We used 13 players in this game.

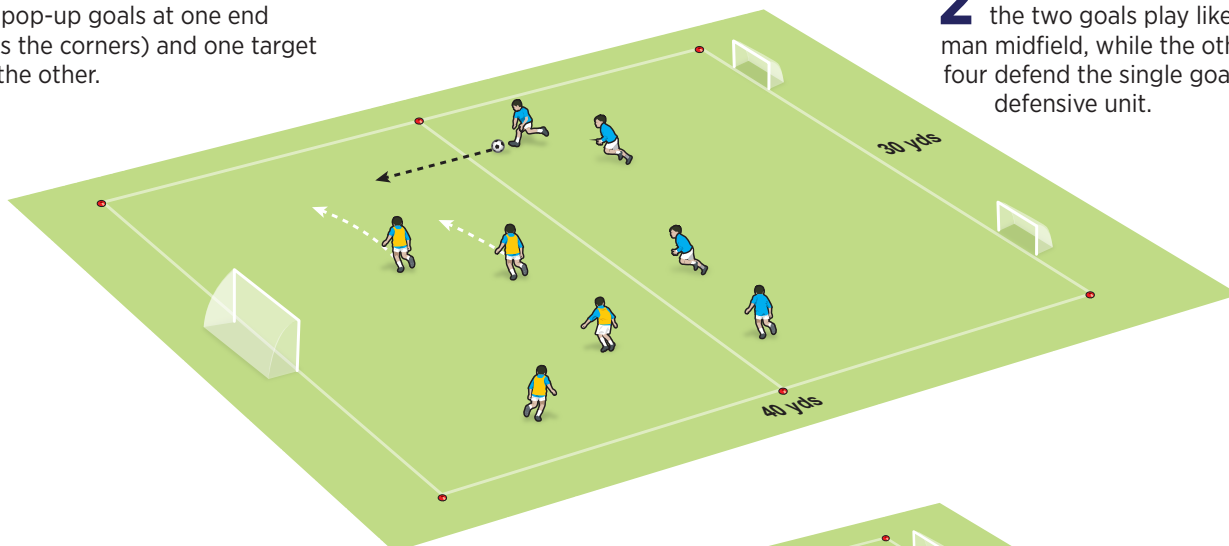
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	--->	—>
	--->	—>

Team technique for defending

ACTIVITY: DYNAMIC MOVEMENT

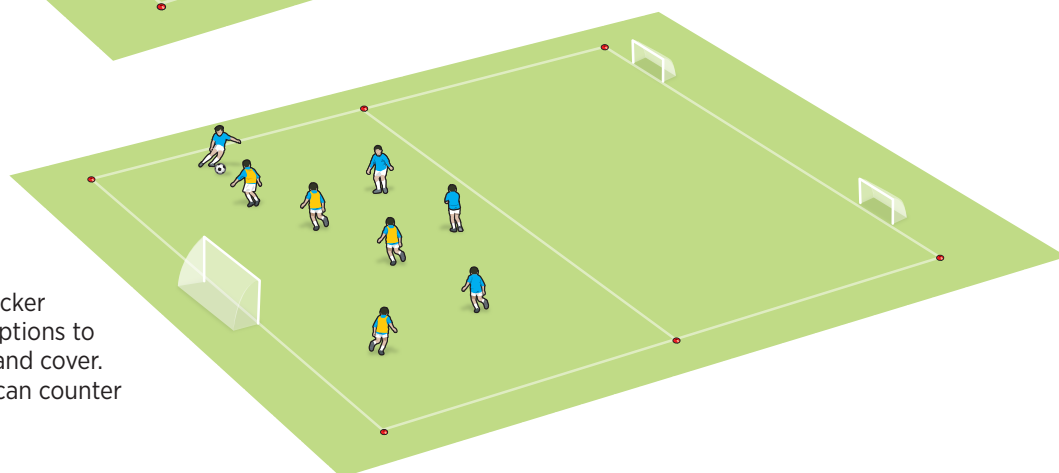
CALL OUT "Get tight" • "Cover your team mates" • "Win the ball and counter-attack"

1 Set up a 40 x 30 yards area with two pop-up goals at one end (towards the corners) and one target goal at the other.

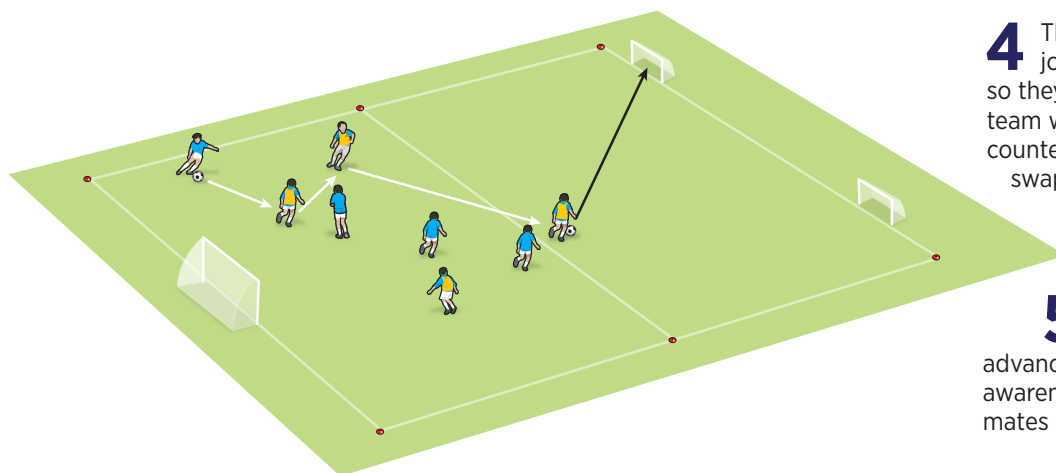


2 Play 4v4 – the players defending the two goals play like a four-man midfield, while the other four defend the single goal as a defensive unit.

3 The team defending the single goal must be tight, showing opponents outside and closing up space. Forcing the attacker away from goal cuts down their options to attack – one defender should go and cover. If they turn over possession they can counter quickly and attack the two goals.



4 The other team have a different job – namely protecting the wings; so they show inside. Here the defending team wins the ball and goes on the counter-attack. Play five attacks then swap team roles.



5 Look for plenty of communication, players advancing with their heads up, and an awareness of getting back to cover team mates when out of possession.

How many players do I need?

We used eight players for the session – attackers and defenders – but you can add midfielders.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

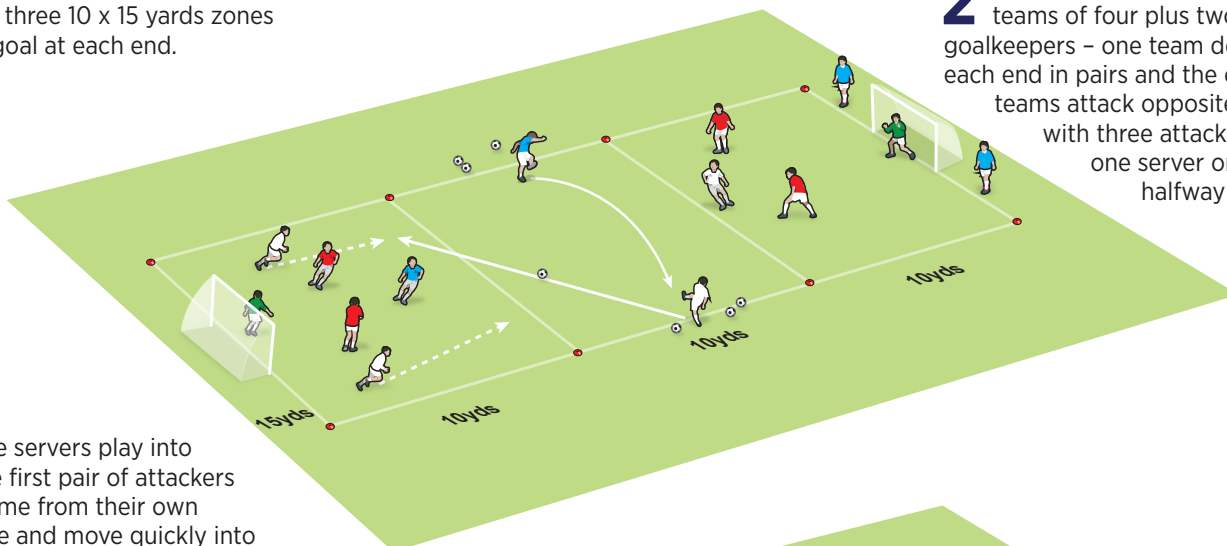
U13 | DEFENDING 3

Team technique for defending

GAME: TRANSITION TO DEFEND

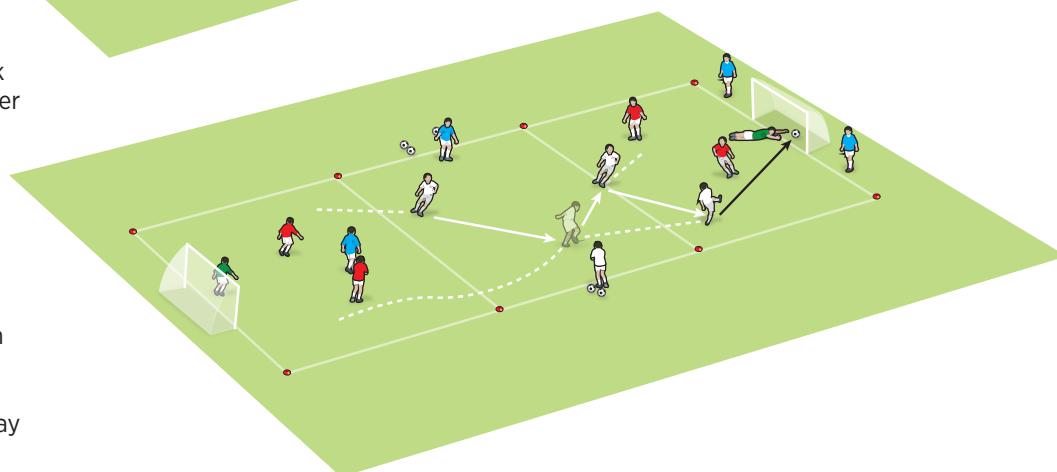
CALL OUT "Get tight" • "Cover your team mates" • "Win the ball and counter-attack"

1 Create a 30 x 15 yards area split into three 10 x 15 yards zones with a goal at each end.

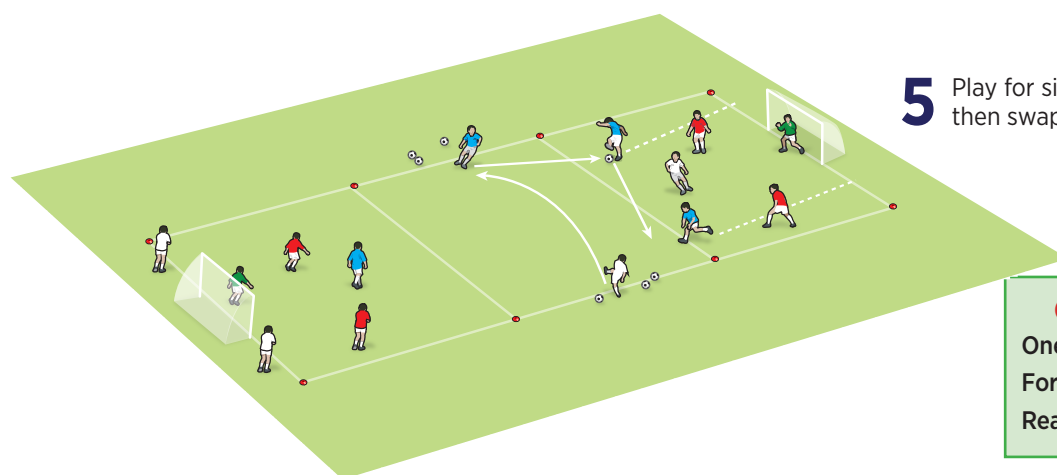


2 Split your players into three teams of four plus two goalkeepers – one team defends each end in pairs and the other teams attack opposite ends with three attackers and one server on the halfway line.

3 The servers play into the first pair of attackers who come from their own goal line and move quickly into midfield ready to launch an attack combining with the central attacker in the opposition area creating a 3v2 situation.



4 Play goes in waves with each team taking turns to attack the two defenders – you want to see good reaction and support play between the two players.



5 Play for six attacks (three for each team) then swap defenders.

GAME PLAY

One player goes to ball one supports.
Force play away from danger.
React quickly.

How many players do I need?

You need 14 players for this game – three teams of four plus two goalkeepers.

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

Full team pressing

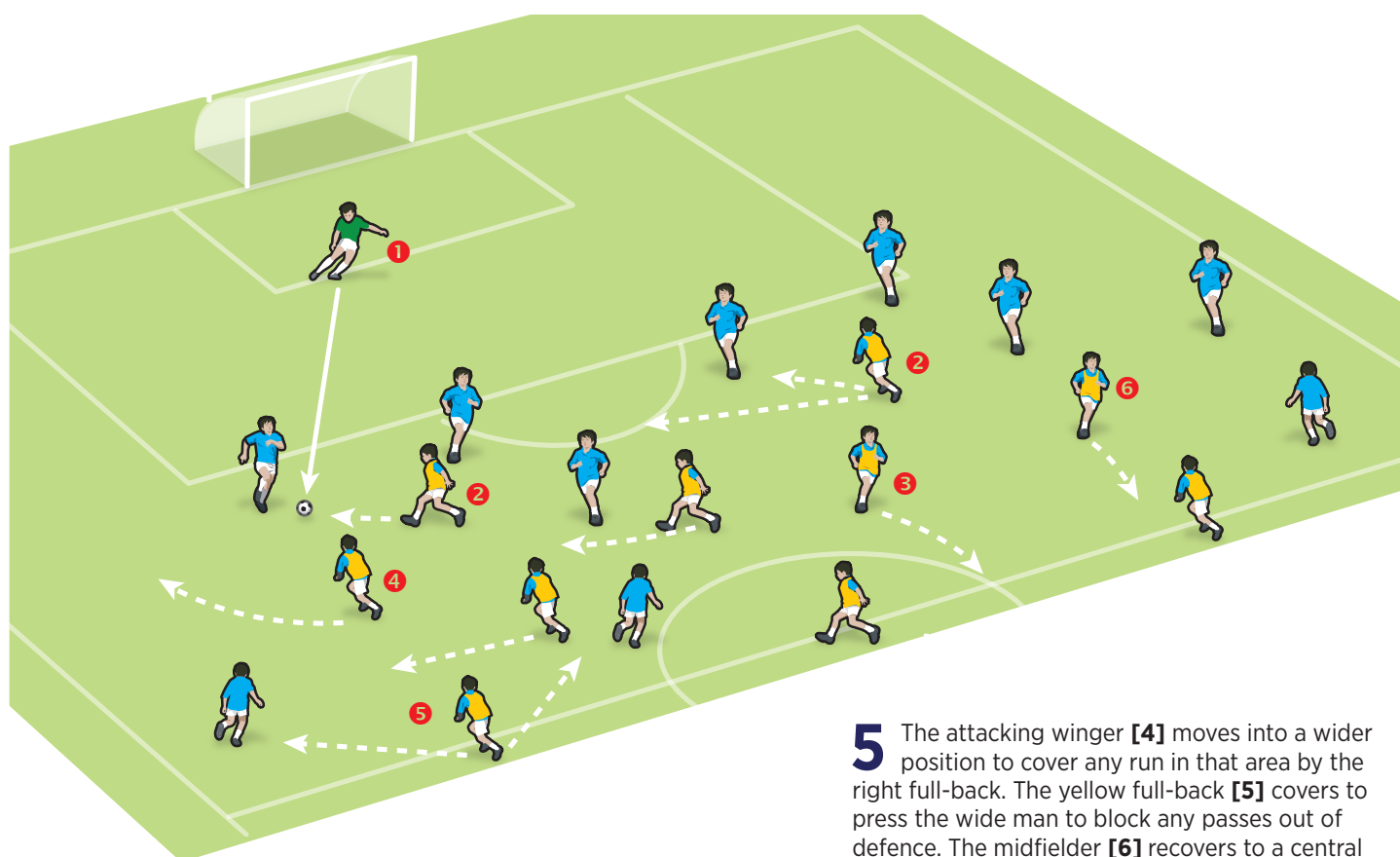
ACTIVITY: PRINCIPLES OF PRESSING

CALL OUT "Work as a team" • "Remember your role" • "Watch your opponents' movement"

1 Use half your normal pitch – this is a scenario to help coach players in full team movement and should be used in a stop-start style of coaching.

2 The blue team plays out from the back with the opposition taking up good pressing positions all over the pitch. Start with a pass from the goalkeeper **[1]**.

3 The closest attacker **[2]** presses his man and closes down space... his fellow attacker must stay aware of a potential pass infield across the back four. He must be ready to press.



4 The role of the central midfielder **[3]** is essential – as he recovers he must stay aware of changing game elements around him, being ready to cover a pass infield or a switch.

5 The attacking winger **[4]** moves into a wider position to cover any run in that area by the right full-back. The yellow full-back **[5]** covers to press the wide man to block any passes out of defence. The midfielder **[6]** recovers to a central area in order to cover any switched ball, as well as to aid his team defensively.

How many players do I need?

Use full 11v11 in this activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

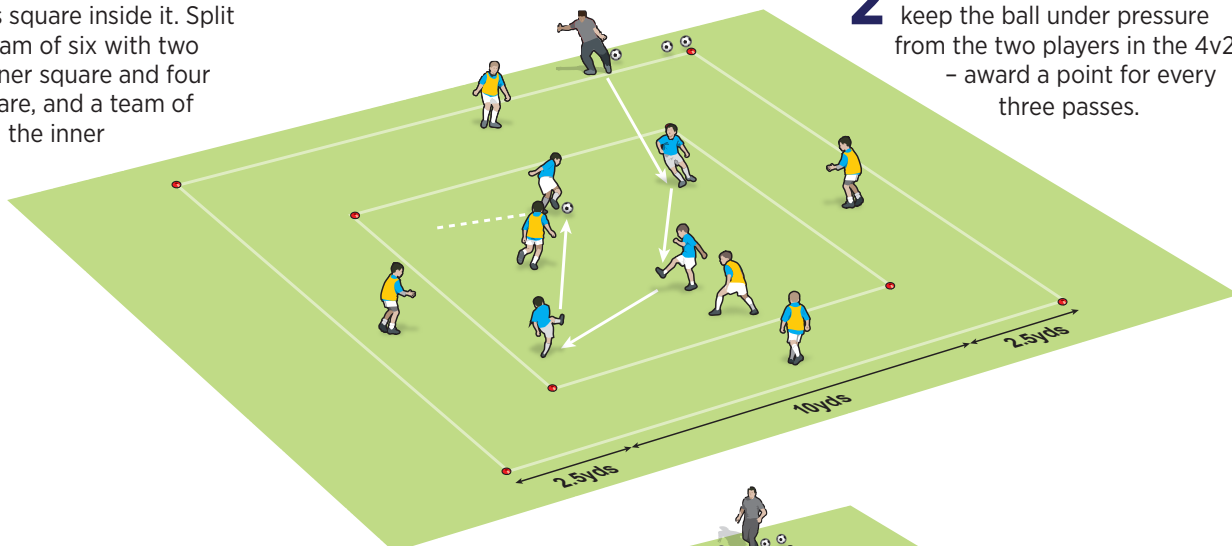
U13 | DEFENDING 4

Full team pressing

GAME: WHEN AND WHERE

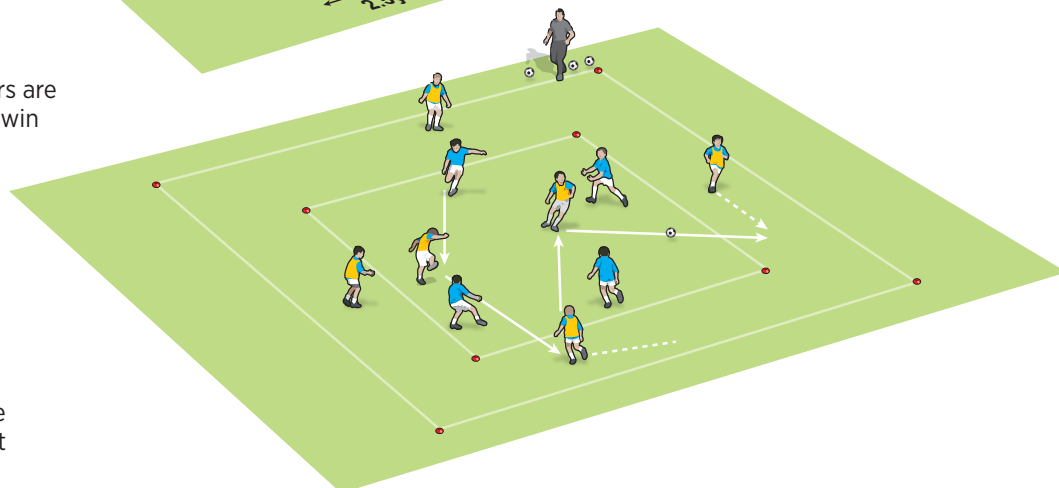
CALL OUT "Work as a team" • "Remember your role" • "Watch your opponents' movement"

1 Set up a 15 x 15 yards square with a 10 x 10 yards square inside it. Split players into a team of six with two players in the inner square and four in the outer square, and a team of four who play in the inner square. Players must stay in their squares.

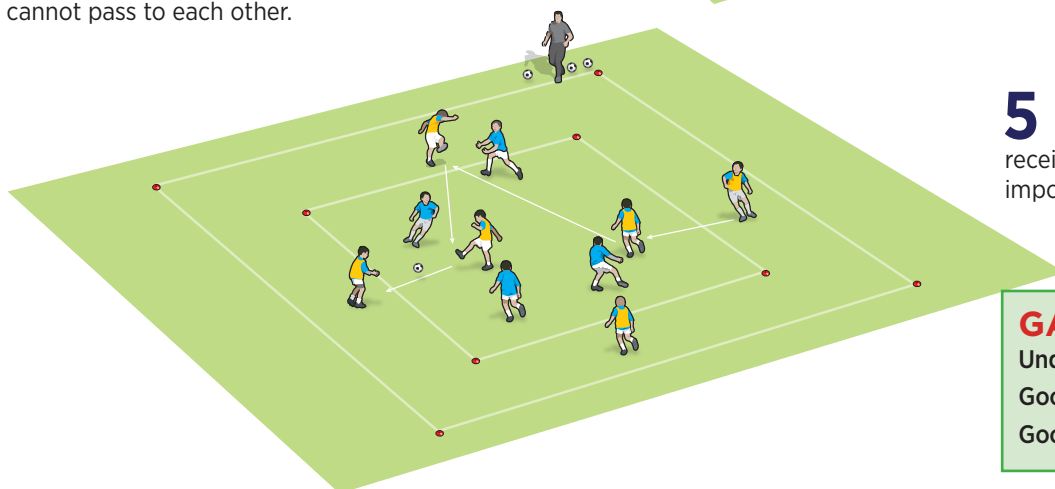


2 The team of four must try and keep the ball under pressure from the two players in the 4v2 – award a point for every three passes.

3 Make sure the pressing players are thinking about how they can win the ball together – if the pressing players win the ball, they pass to keep the ball using the outside players.



4 When the team of six has the ball, the outside players must pass back into the square – they cannot pass to each other.



5 Pressing is the key coaching point but body position, passing, receiving and movement are all important.

GAME PLAY
Understanding pressing.
Good support play.
Good first touch.

How many players do I need?

This uses 10 players in the game, split into a team of six and a team of four.

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

Making a slide tackle and a block tackle

ACTIVITY: TACKLING SKILLS

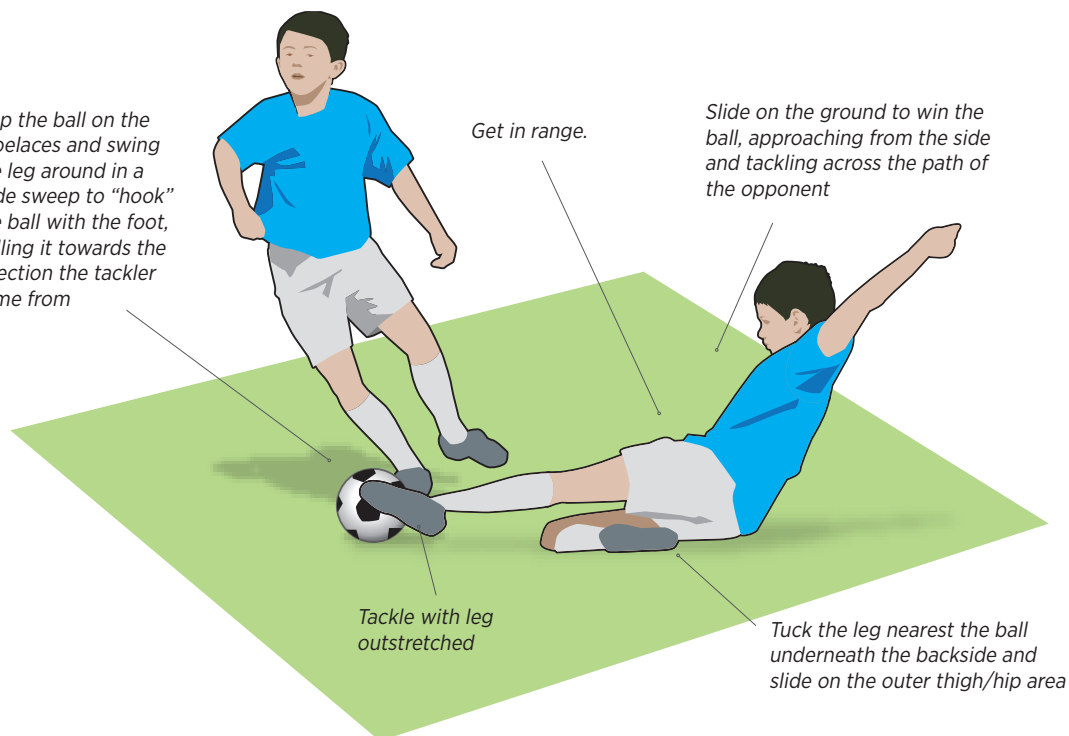
CALL OUT "Head over the ball" • "Bend your knees" • "Lock your ankle"

The slide tackle

1 Set players up in pairs with a ball between them and two cones that are 10 yards apart. One player passes to the other then tries a tackle to win the ball back.

2 The tackler must get on his feet quickly whether the tackle is successful or not.

Trap the ball on the shoelaces and swing the leg around in a wide sweep to "hook" the ball with the foot, pulling it towards the direction the tackler came from



The block tackle

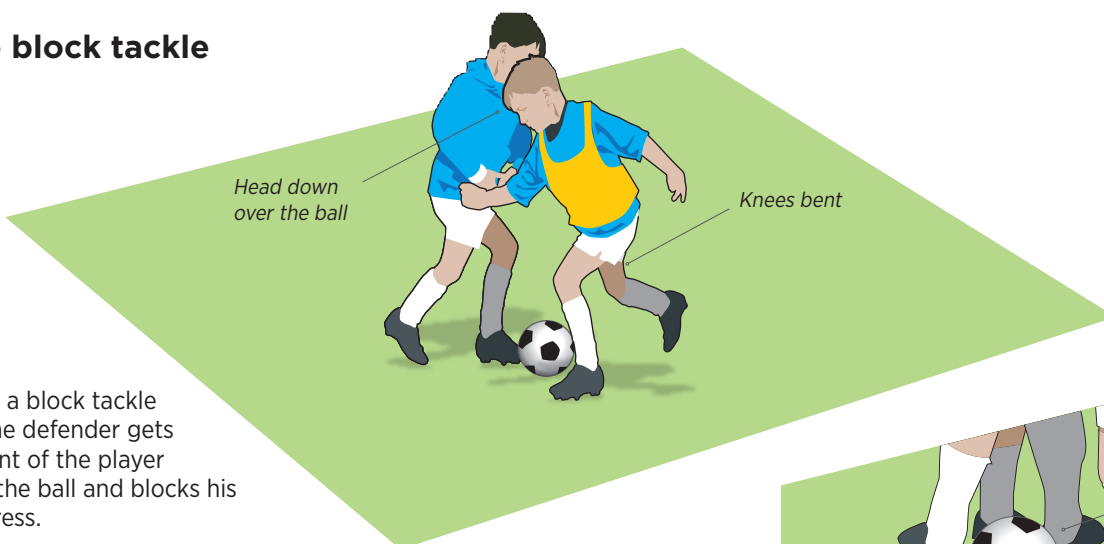
1 In a block tackle the defender gets in front of the player with the ball and blocks his progress.

2 Run through the block tackle with players in pairs. The two players face each other with the player on the ball at first remaining fairly static so the defender can make the tackle.

3 The tackling player should try to get the correct technique by going slowly through the checklist: head over the ball; bend your knees; lock your ankle.

Head down over the ball

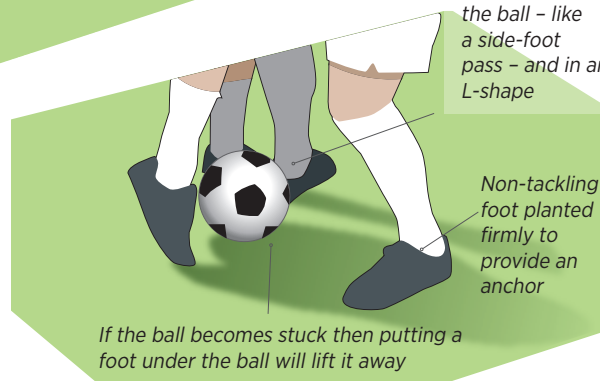
Knees bent



Tackling foot makes contact with the middle of the ball – like a side-foot pass – and in an L-shape

Non-tackling foot planted firmly to provide an anchor

If the ball becomes stuck then putting a foot under the ball will lift it away



How many players do I need?

Players practise in pairs.

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

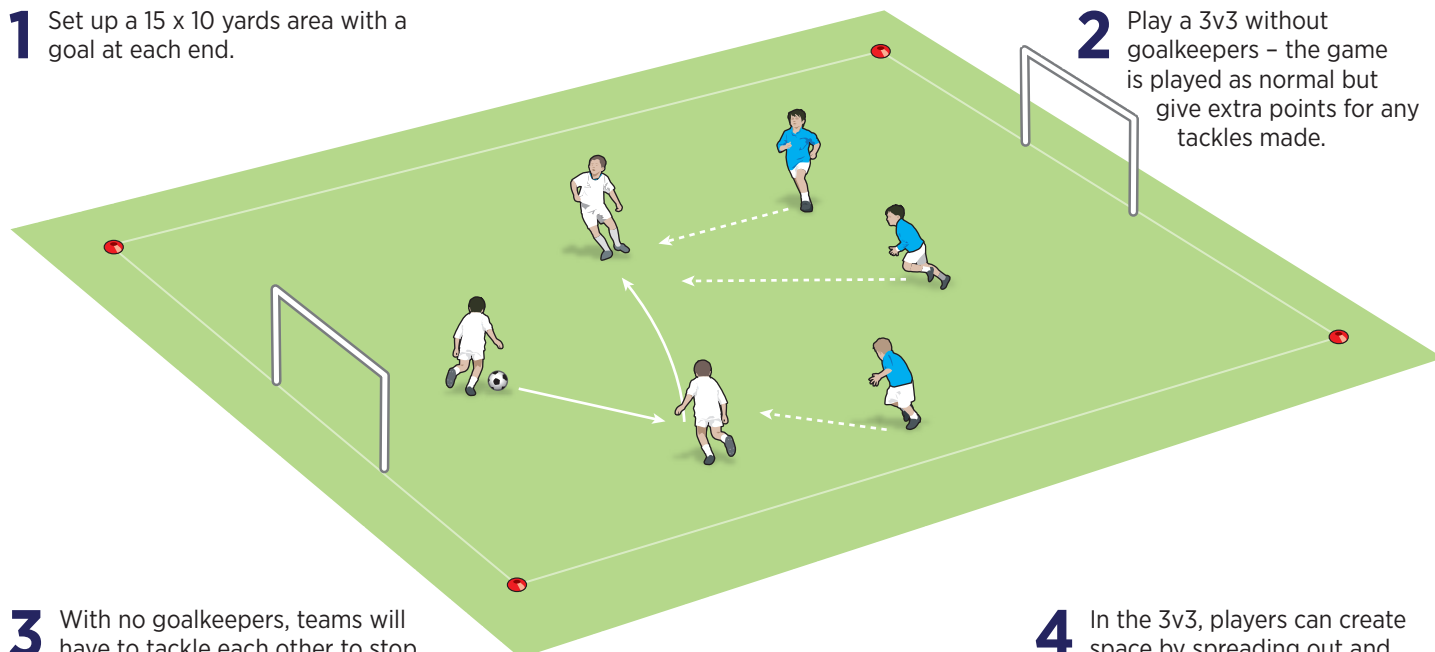
U13 | DEFENDING 5

Making a slide tackle and a block tackle

GAME: TACKLE IN A 3V3

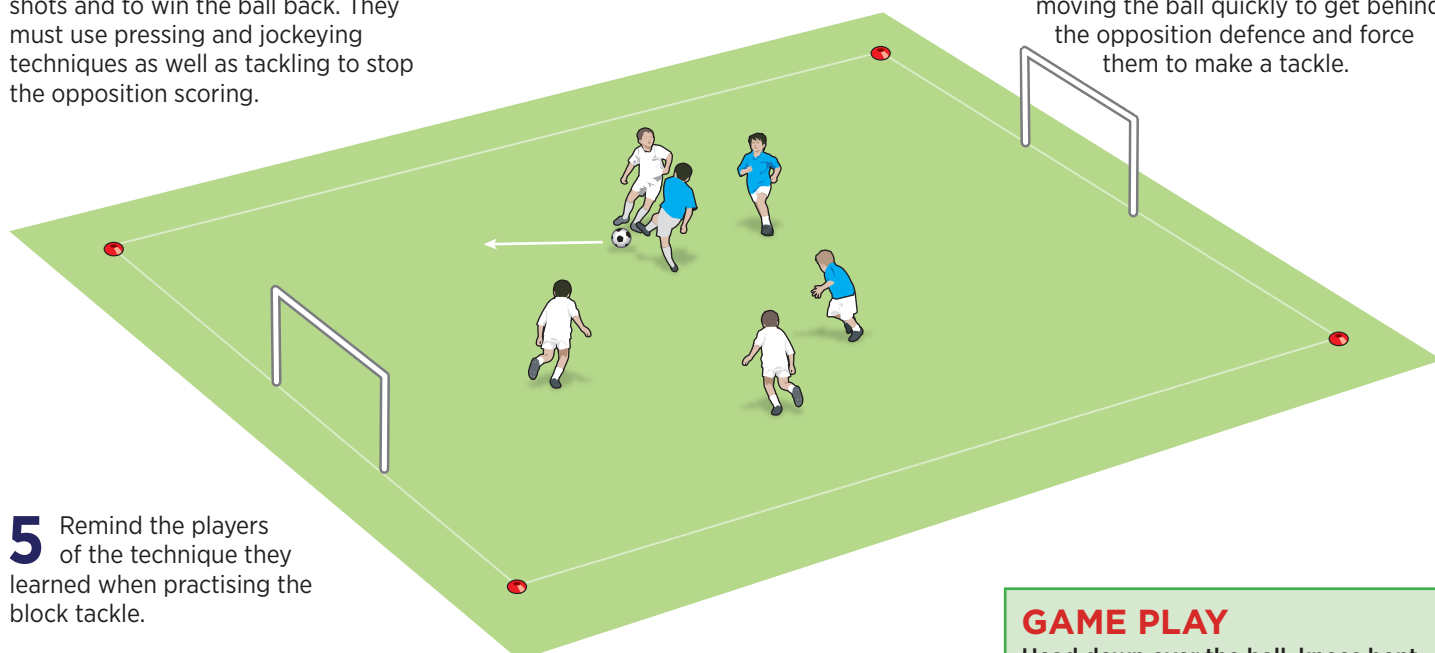
CALL OUT "Head over the ball" • "Bend your knees" • "Lock your ankle"

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



2 Play a 3v3 without goalkeepers – the game is played as normal but give extra points for any tackles made.

3 With no goalkeepers, teams will have to tackle each other to stop shots and to win the ball back. They must use pressing and jockeying techniques as well as tackling to stop the opposition scoring.



4 In the 3v3, players can create space by spreading out and moving the ball quickly to get behind the opposition defence and force them to make a tackle.

5 Remind the players of the technique they learned when practising the block tackle.

GAME PLAY
Head down over the ball, knees bent.
Firm standing leg.
The knee and ankle locked so the leg is strong.

How many players do I need?

This game uses six players.

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

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SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U13-U14

SKILLS

U13-U14 | SKILLS 1

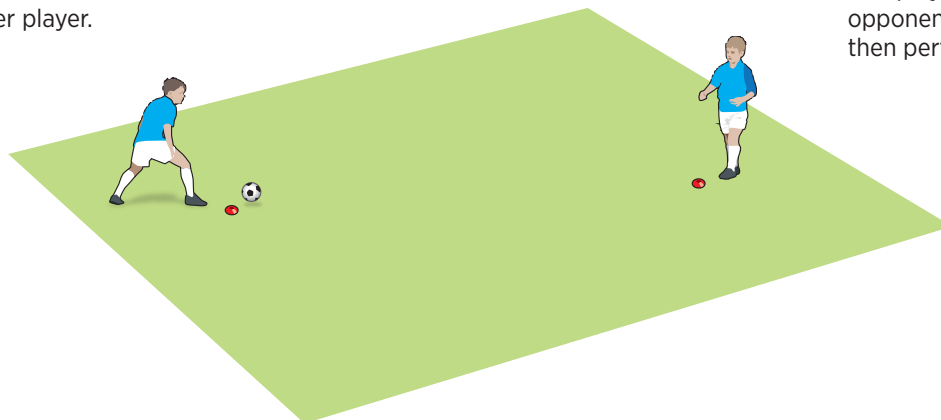
180° Spin

ACTIVITY: SKILLS SESSION

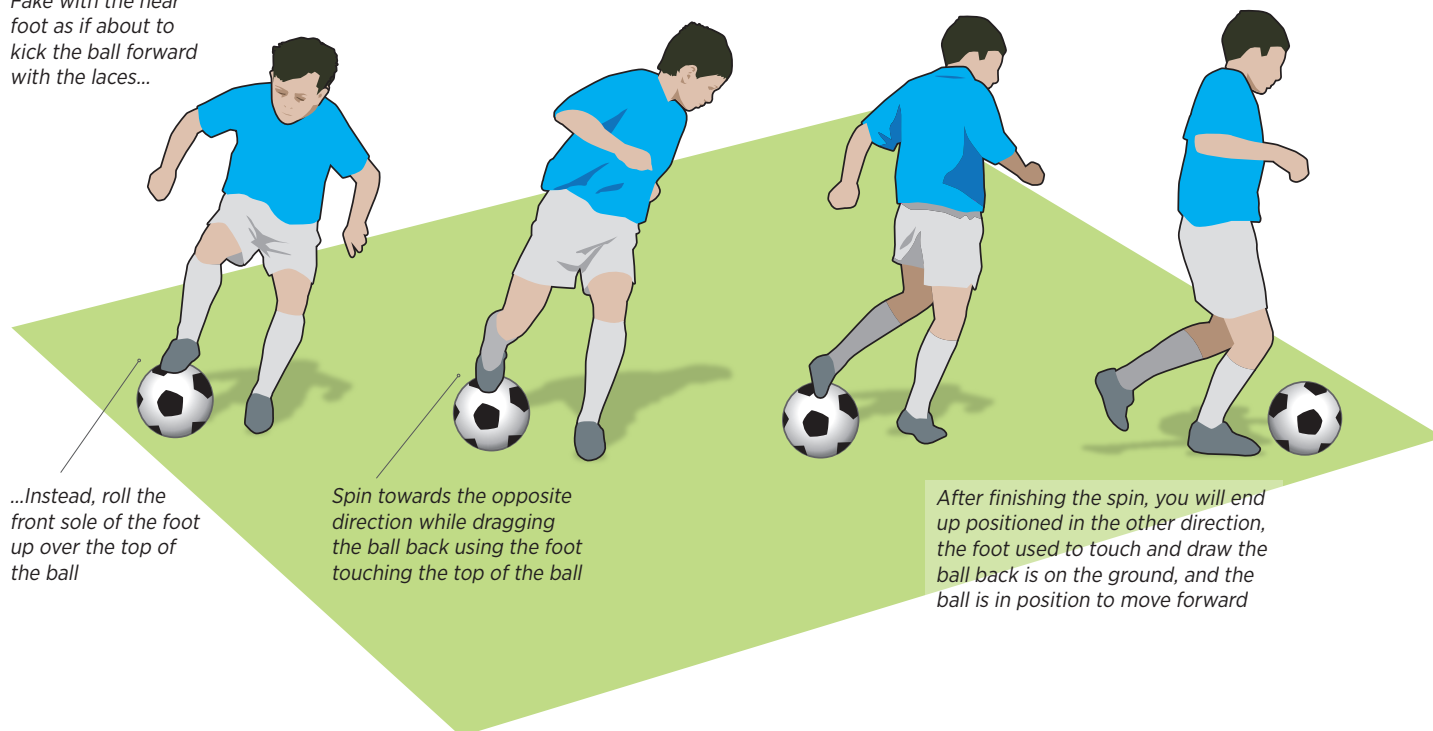
CALL OUT “Fake to kick but roll the ball” • “Spin to face the opposite direction”

1 Set up two cones 10 yards apart. One player has a ball and moves towards the other player.

2 When the players meet, the ball player shields the ball from his opponent to the outside and front, then performs a 180° spin.



Fake with the near foot as if about to kick the ball forward with the laces...



...Instead, roll the front sole of the foot up over the top of the ball

Spin towards the opposite direction while dragging the ball back using the foot touching the top of the ball

After finishing the spin, you will end up positioned in the other direction, the foot used to touch and draw the ball back is on the ground, and the ball is in position to move forward

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs

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

U13-U14 | SKILLS 2

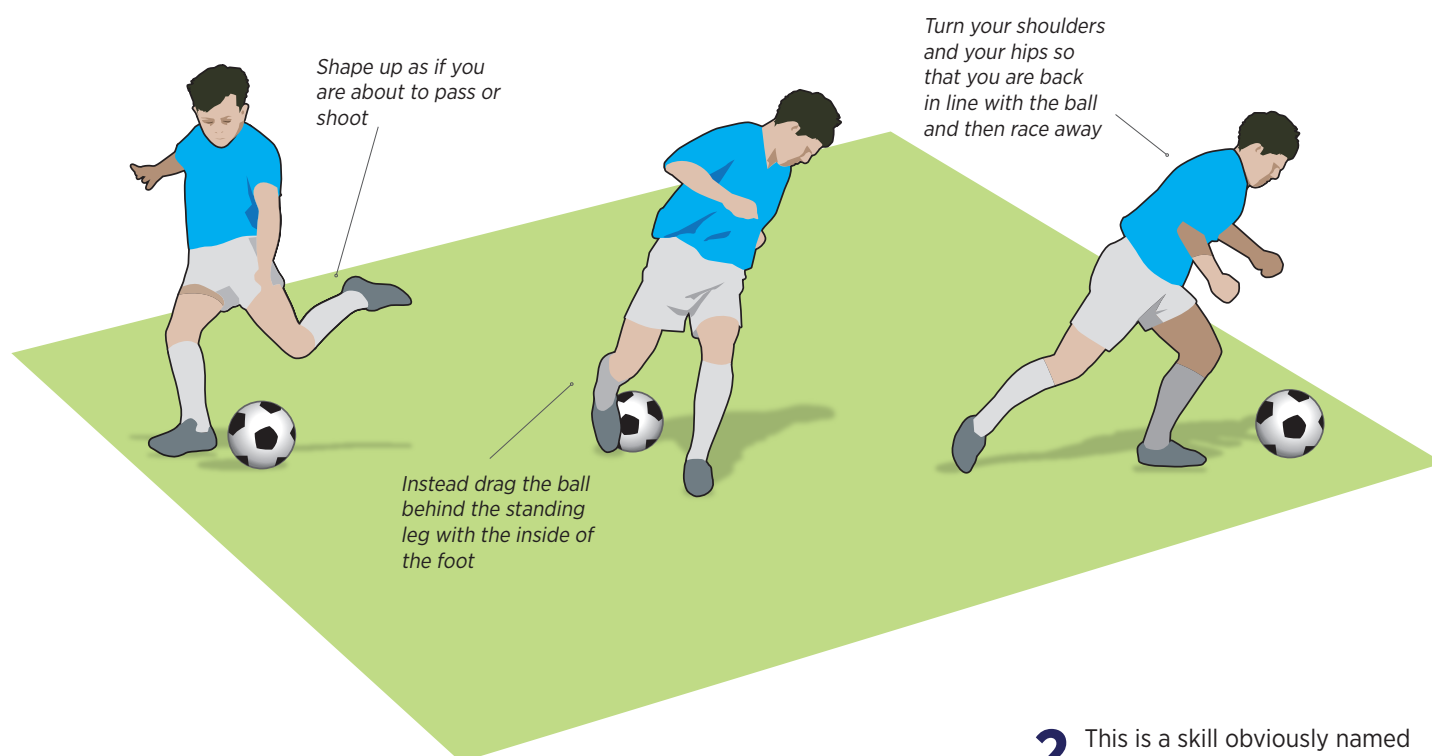
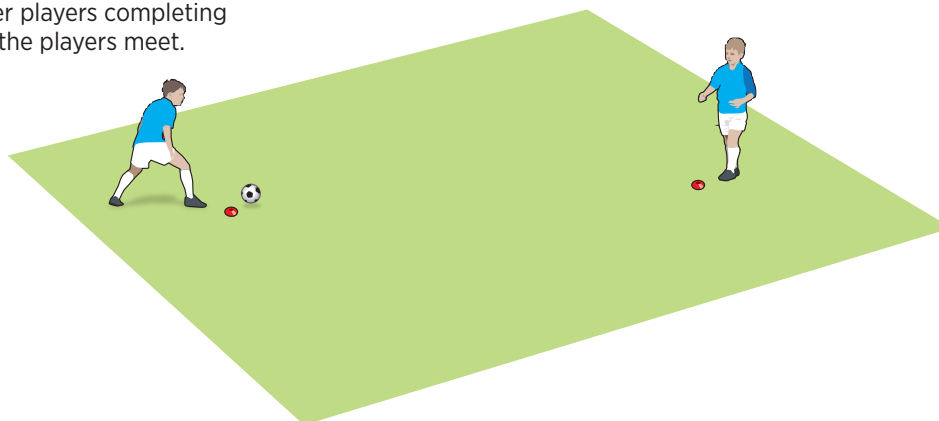
The Cruyff turn

ACTIVITY: SKILLS SESSION

CALL OUT

“Shape up as if you’re going to pass or shoot” • “Drag the ball back behind your leg”
• “Turn and go”

- 1 Set up two cones 10 yards apart. One player has a ball and moves towards the other players completing a Cruyff Turn as the players meet.



- 2 This is a skill obviously named after the brilliant Dutchman Johan Cruyff. Get your players to give it plenty of practise, use lively feet and they will soon be the envy of their team mates. This trick is great for losing an opponent.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

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

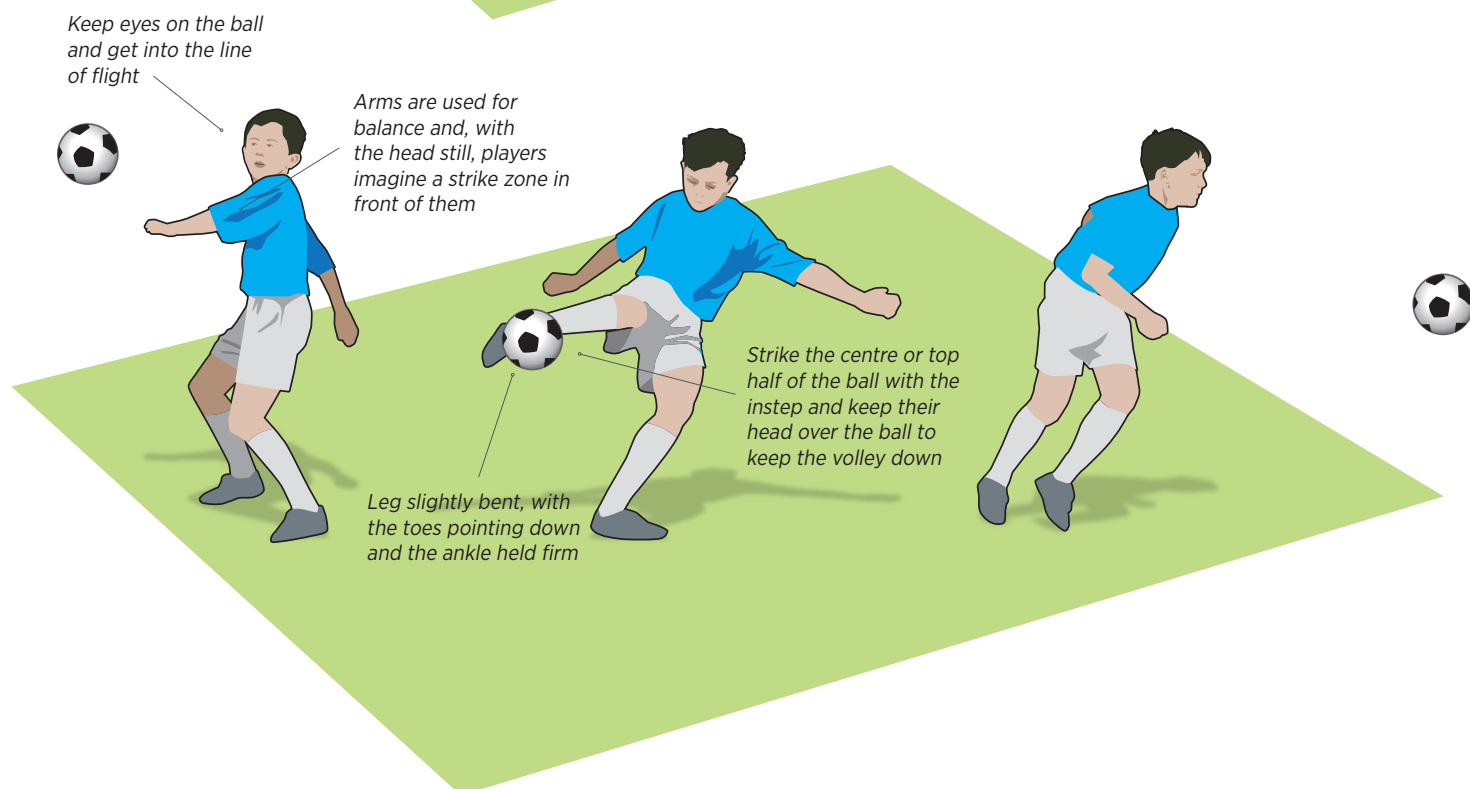
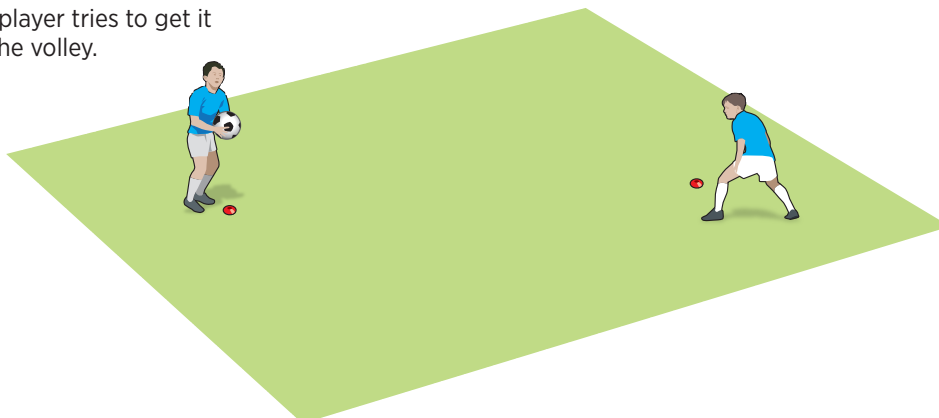
U13-U14 | SKILLS 3

Volley

ACTIVITY: SKILLS SESSION

CALL OUT "Focus on the ball" • "Point your toes down" • "Hold your ankle firm" • Strike the centre of the ball"

1 Set up two cones 10 yards apart. One player serves the ball with a throw and the player tries to get it back to him on the volley.



How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

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

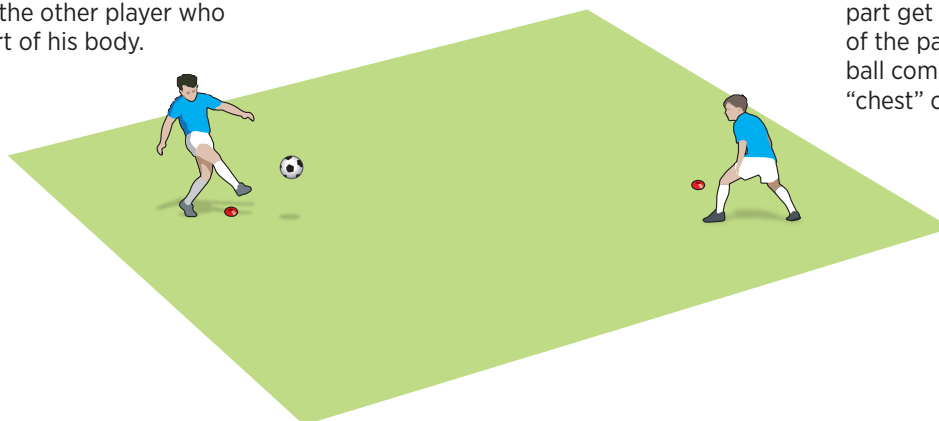
U13-U14 | SKILLS 4

First touch

ACTIVITY: SKILLS SESSION

CALL OUT "Good first touch important!" • "Get into line with the flight of the ball quickly" • "Relax the contact area to cushion the ball"

1 Set up two cones 10 yards apart. One player has a ball and serves lofted passes to the other player who controls with part of his body.



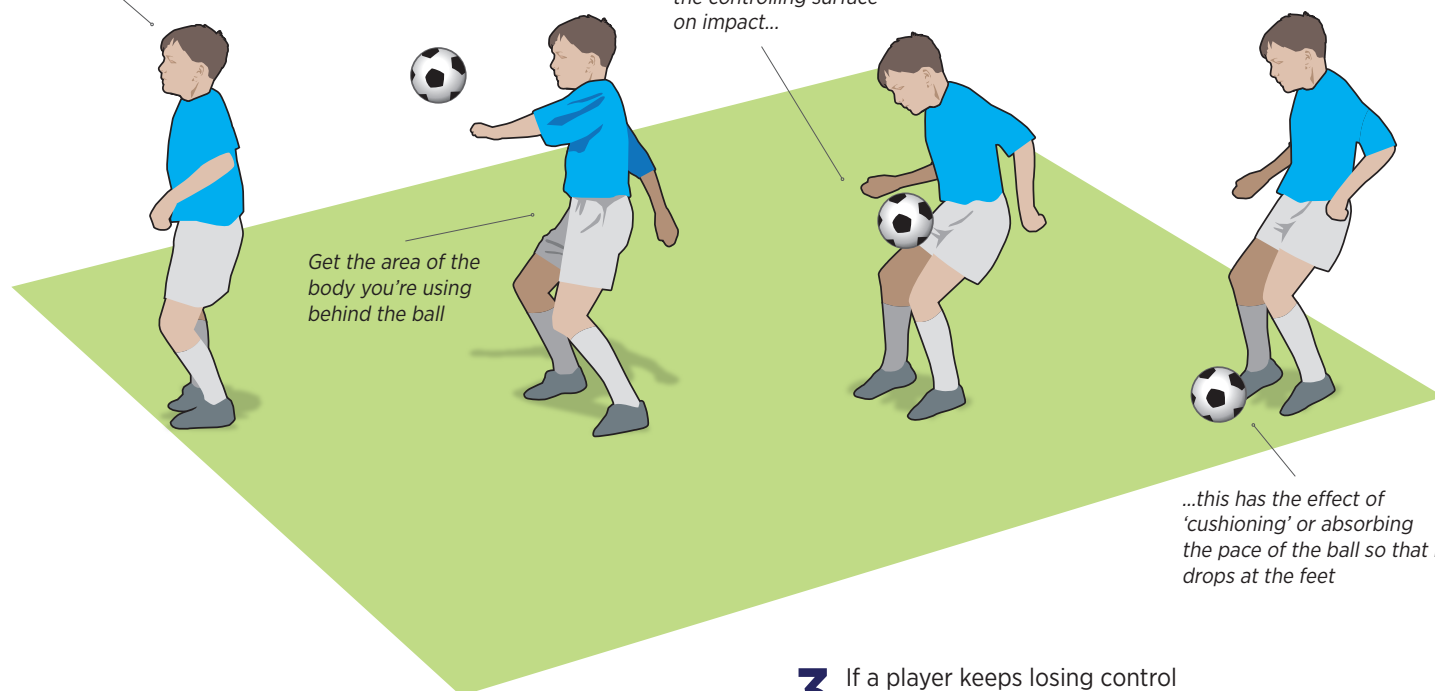
2 If a player is indecisive when choosing the controlling body part get him to shout out the name of the part he intends to use as the ball comes to him, for example "foot", "chest" or "thigh".

Keep eyes on the ball and get into the line of flight

Take the 'sting' out of the ball by pulling back the controlling surface on impact...

Get the area of the body you're using behind the ball

...this has the effect of 'cushioning' or absorbing the pace of the ball so that it drops at the feet



3 If a player keeps losing control because the ball keeps bouncing off them, encourage them to relax and exaggerate the movement.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

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

U13-U14 | SKILLS 5

Jockeying

ACTIVITY: SKILLS SESSION

CALL OUT

“Keep your eye on the ball” • “Get side on to the ball” • “Get in a good position to block the route”

- 1 Set up two cones 10 yards apart. One player has a ball and moves towards the other player.



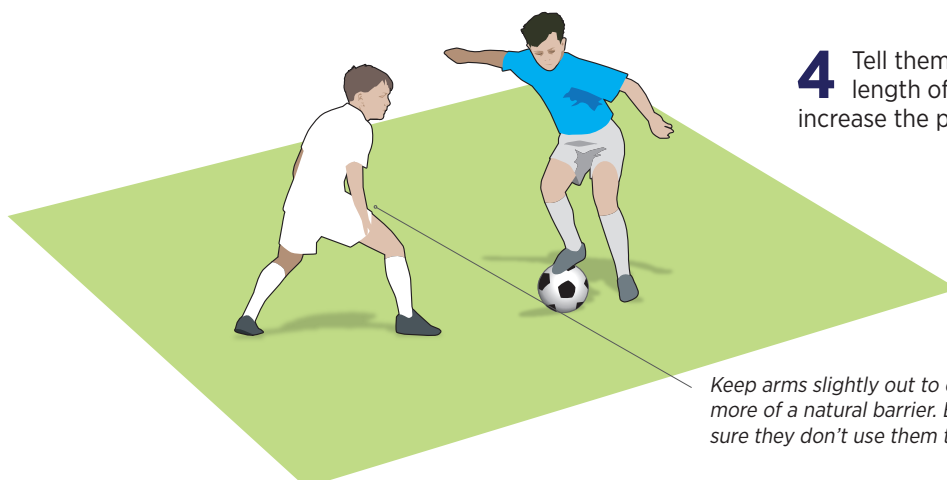
Adopt a side-on position with shoulders opened out like a barrier. This keeps the opposition in front where they can be seen

- 2 You don't always need to tackle an opponent to dispossess them or slow their progress. Jockeying denies your opponent time and space, and it's a good tactic to allow your team mates to get back in position.

Keep knees slightly bent, with weight on the front of the feet, which makes it easier to change direction while they move backwards



- 3 Make sure your players stay goal-side, and also in front of your opponent. They do this by turning off their back foot as they move backwards.



- 4 Tell them to stay within an arm's length of their opponent to increase the pressure on them.

Keep arms slightly out to create more of a natural barrier. But make sure they don't use them to push!

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

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

U13-U14 | SKILLS 6

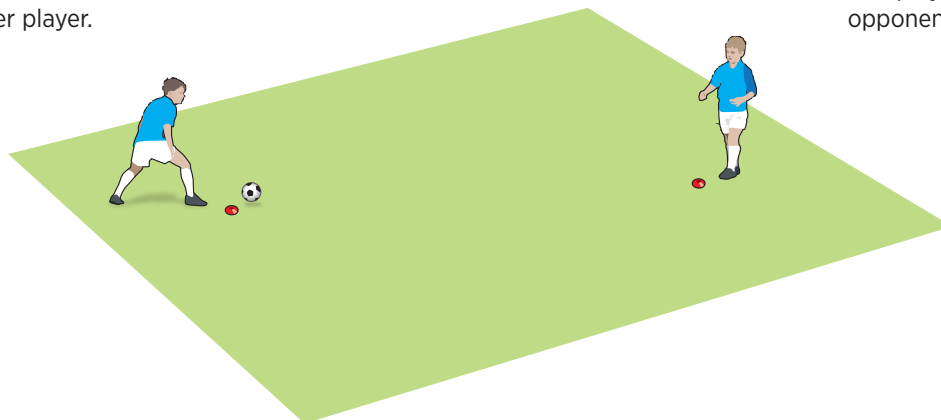
The stop turn

ACTIVITY: SKILLS SESSION

CALL OUT "Use the ball of your foot to stop the ball" • "Turn quickly" • "Get the ball out from under your feet"

1 Set up two cones 10 yards apart. One player has a ball and moves towards the other player.

2 When the players meet, the ball player shields the ball from his opponent and performs a stop turn.

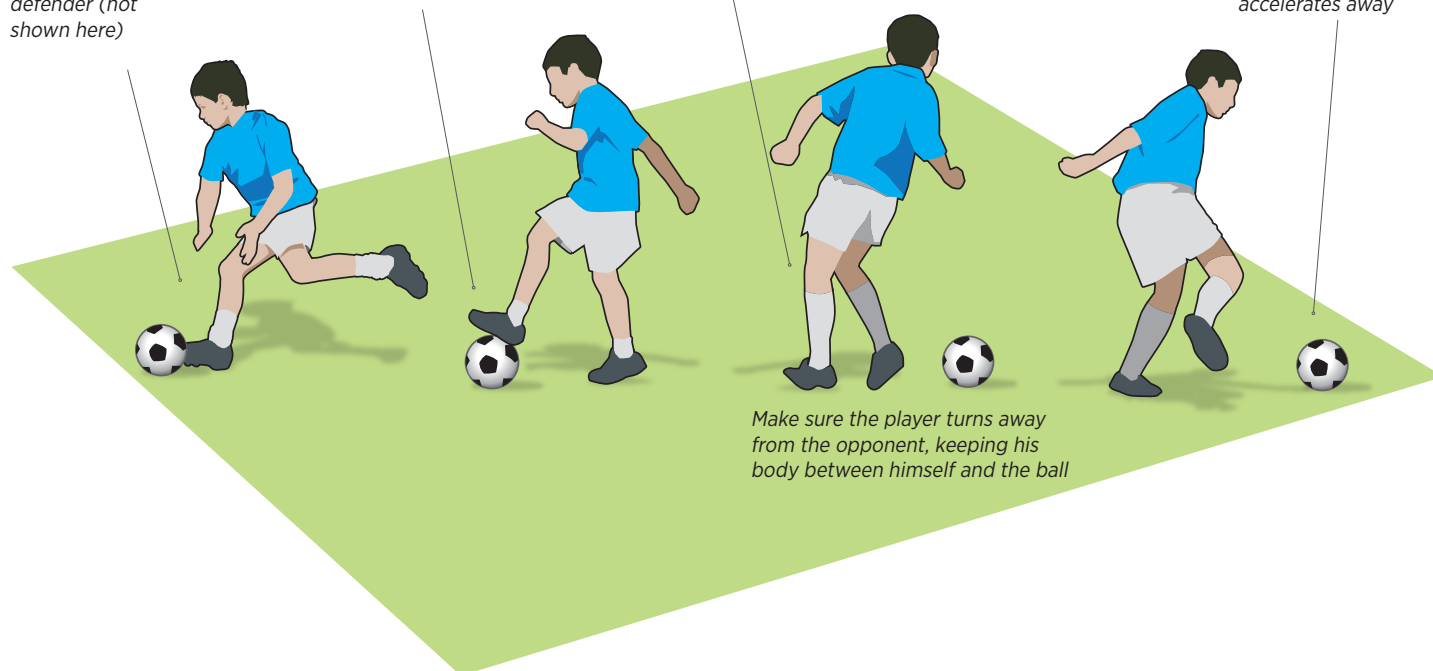


The player dribbles the ball at speed under pressure from a defender (not shown here)

He stops suddenly, halting the ball with his foot

The player pivots on his standing leg to move off with the ball in the opposite direction.

Pushing the ball out from under his feet he pushes off on his standing leg and accelerates away



Make sure the player turns away from the opponent, keeping his body between himself and the ball

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

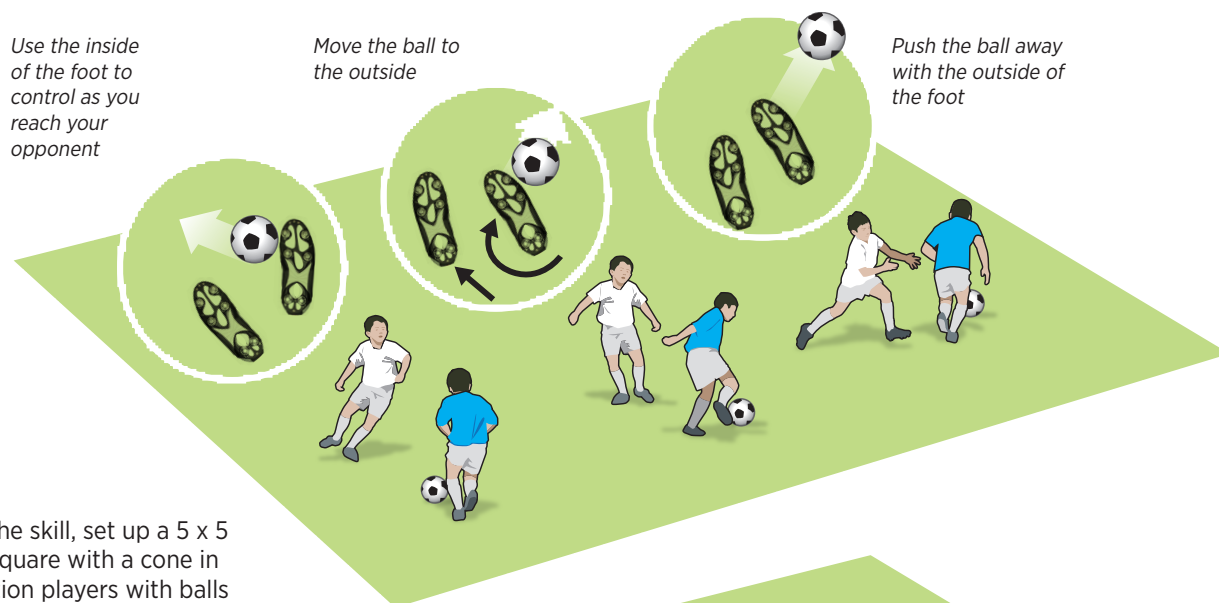
Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	----->	----->
	----->	----->

The feint

ACTIVITY: SKILLS SESSION

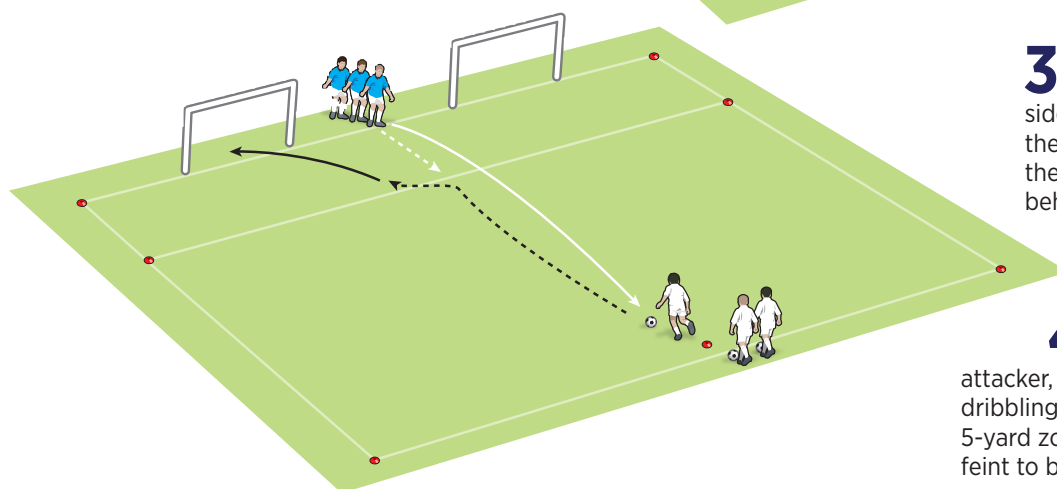
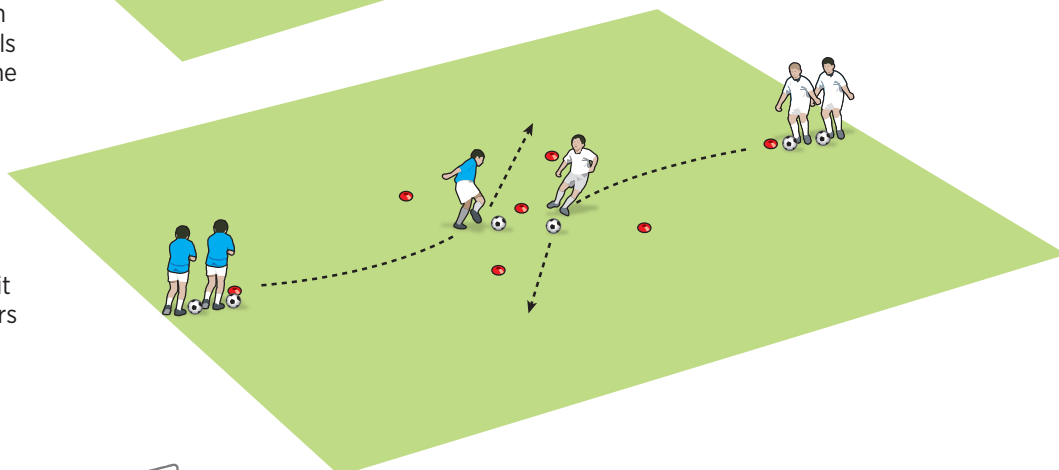
CALL OUT

“Lean one way and go the other” • “Use the outside of the foot to push the ball away”
• “One touch to get out the square” • “Choose the goal you are aiming for early”



1 To practise the skill, set up a 5 x 5 yards cone square with a cone in the centre. Position players with balls in two lines, 8 yards either side of the square.

2 Players run towards each other into the cone square and feint one way (here it's left) when they hit the centre cone. Practise with players feinting both left and right.



3 Set up a 45 x 20 yards area with two goals on one of the long sides and a 5-yard zone in front of the goals. Defenders line up between the goals and attackers line up behind a cone on the opposite side.

4 The ball is played from a defender to an opposing attacker, who runs towards the defender dribbling the ball. The defender stays in the 5-yard zone and the attacker must play a feint to beat him, then score in either goal.

How many players do I need?

Players practise in pairs. We used three pairs for the two games, but you can change the numbers to suit.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

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SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U13-U14

RESTARTS

U13-U14 | RESTARTS 1

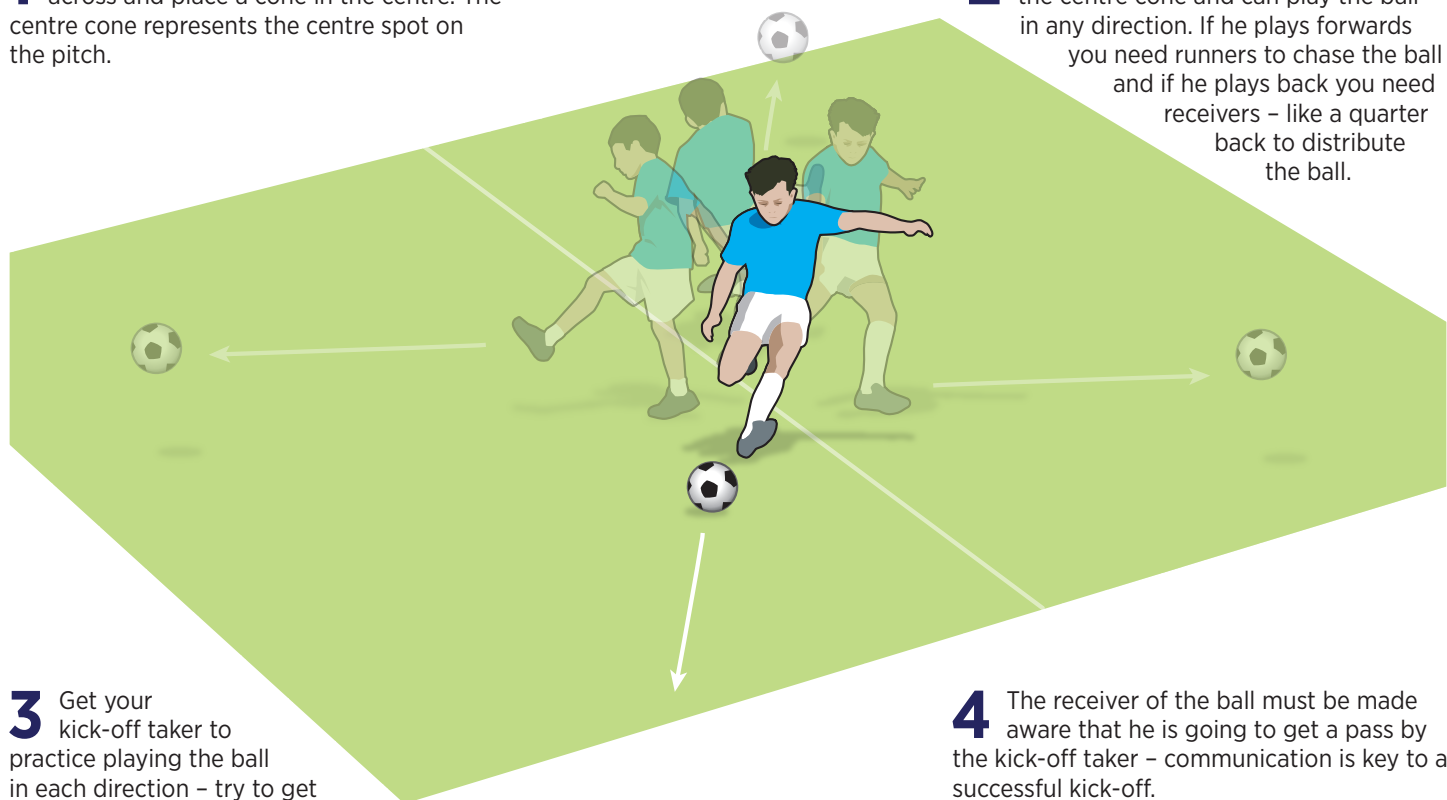
Kick-off

ACTIVITY: THE LAW

CALL OUT "Pass the ball to a team mate" • "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 The player taking kick-off does so from the centre cone and can play the ball in any direction. If he plays forwards you need runners to chase the ball and if he plays back you need receivers – like a quarter back to distribute the ball.



3 Get your kick-off taker to practice playing the ball in each direction – try to get him to disguise where he is going to kick the ball. A lazy pass back can cause problems for the team.

4 The receiver of the ball must be made aware that he is going to get a pass by the kick-off taker – communication is key to a successful kick-off.

5 Remember: The ball can go in any direction from kick-off, it doesn't have to go forward.

LAWS OF SOCCER

Start and restart of play

A kick-off starts both halves of a match, both halves of extra time and restarts play after a goal has been scored.

All players must be in their own half.

The opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 10 yds from the ball until it is in play.

The ball must be stationary on the centre mark.

The referee gives a signal.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.

A goal may be scored directly against the opponents from the kick-off.

How many players do I need?

You need a main kick-off taker.

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

U13-U14 | RESTARTS 1

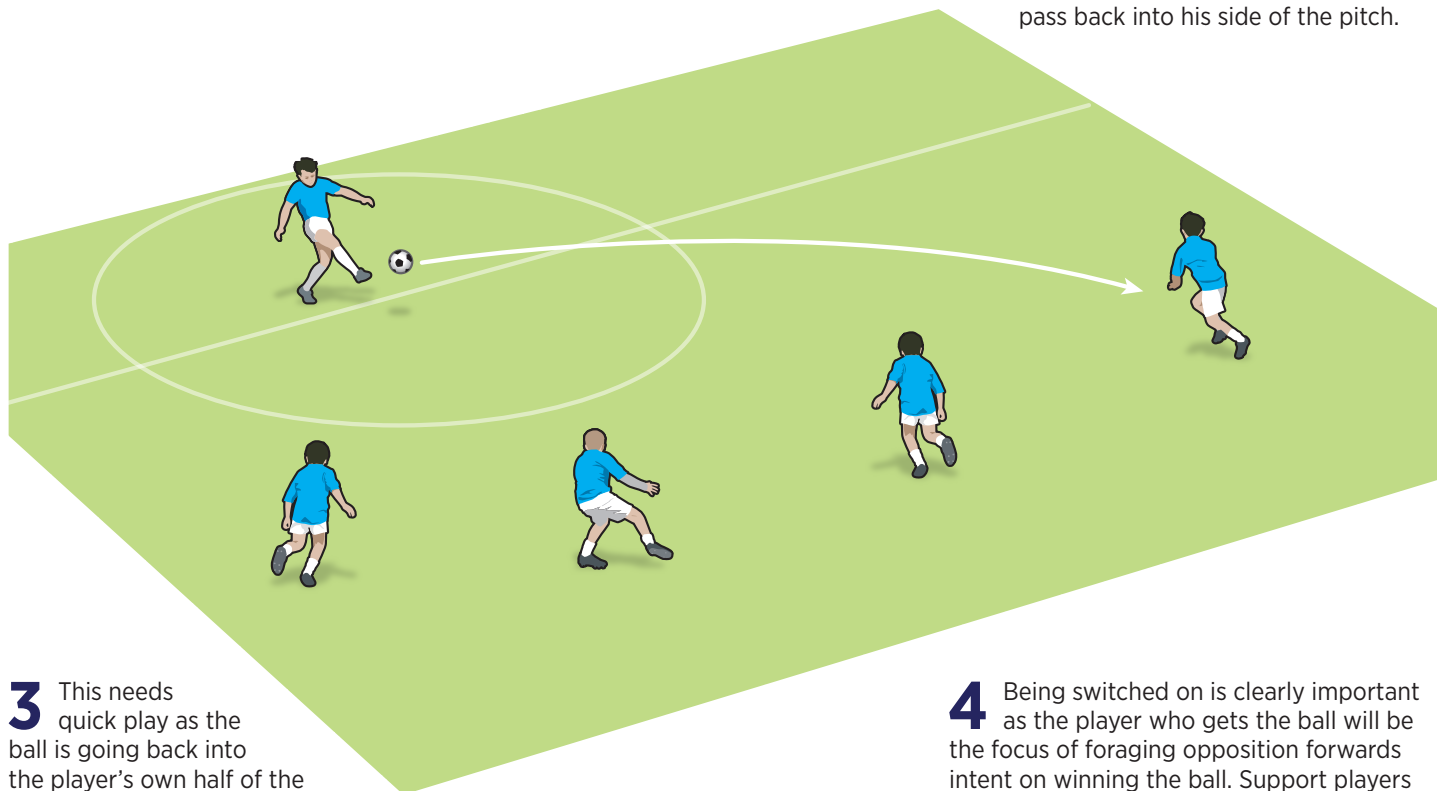
Kick-off

GAME: FORWARD MARCH!

CALL OUT "Pass the ball to a team mate" • "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, one player takes kick-off and has four options to pass back into his side of the pitch.



3 This needs quick play as the ball is going back into the player's own half of the pitch. Communication is key and immediately the pass is made to one of the four players the others and the kick-off taker must react and support the player on the ball.

4 Being switched on is clearly important as the player who gets the ball will be the focus of foraging opposition forwards intent on winning the ball. Support players are key to offering routes that the receiver can use to pass into areas less crowded.

5 Practise four ways to do the kick-off passing back into your team's half of the pitch - you can do it for a few minutes at each training session as a way of warming the players up. Also let them have a go at passing the ball forward for the four players to chase into the opposition half like they did at 9-a-side.

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 five man kick-off practice

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

U13-U14 | RESTARTS 2

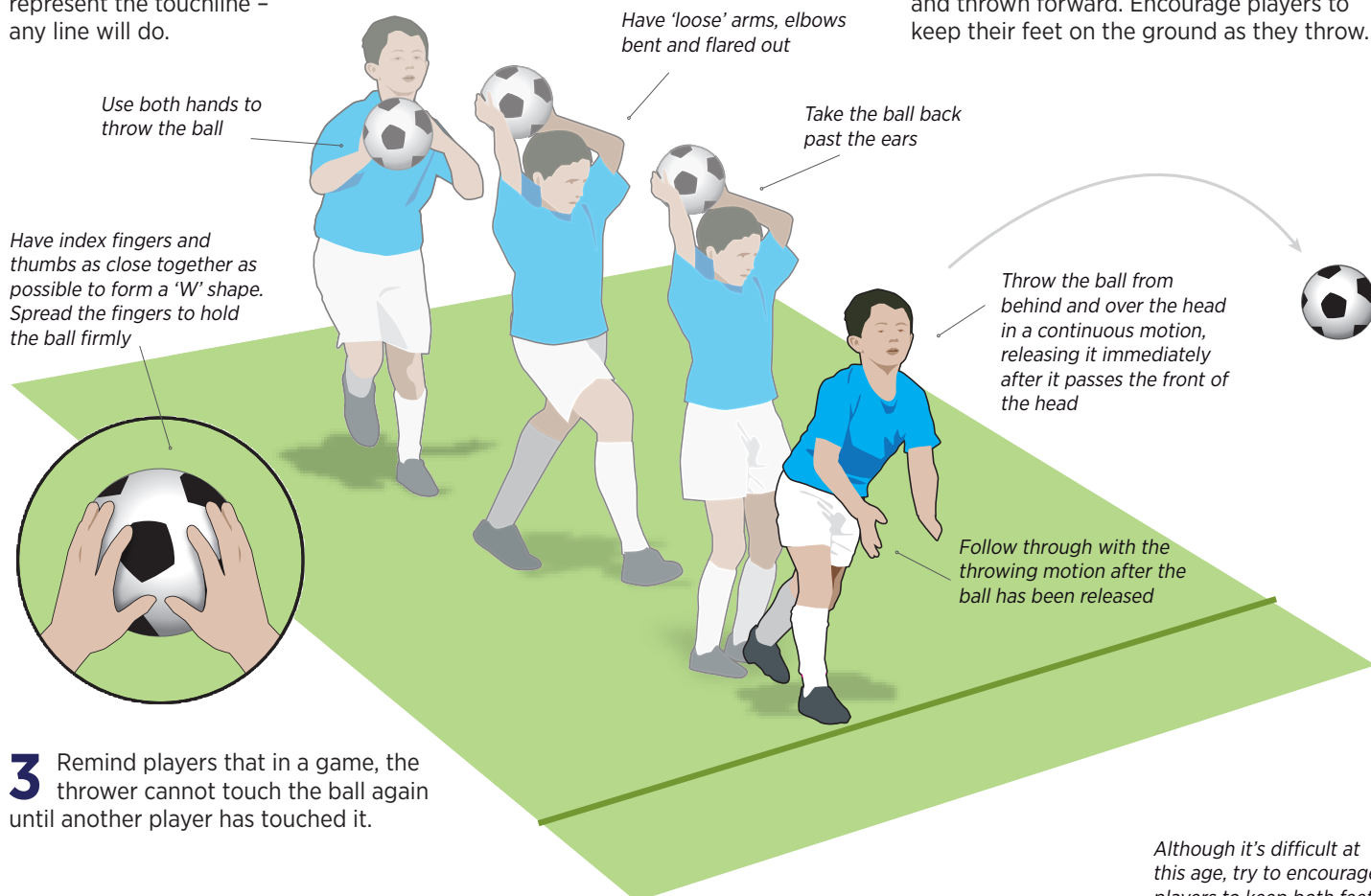
Throw-in

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.



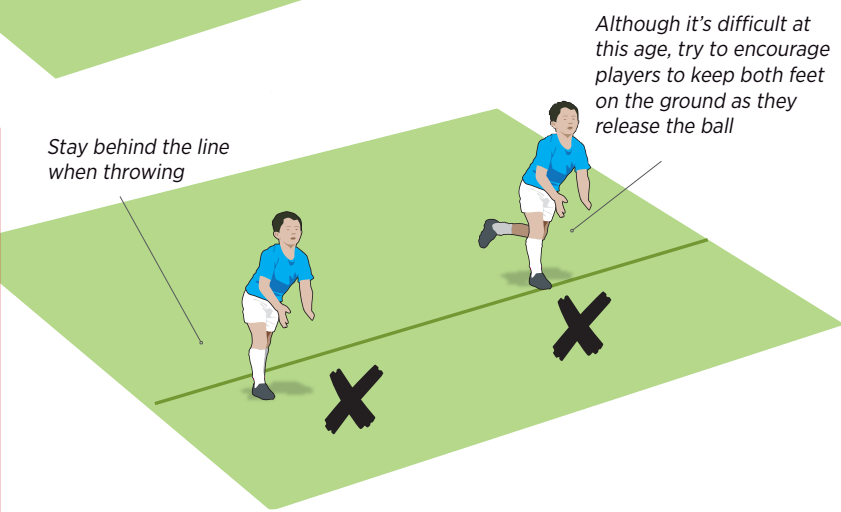
3 Remind players that in a game, the thrower cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.

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.



How many players do I need?

Players work individually.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

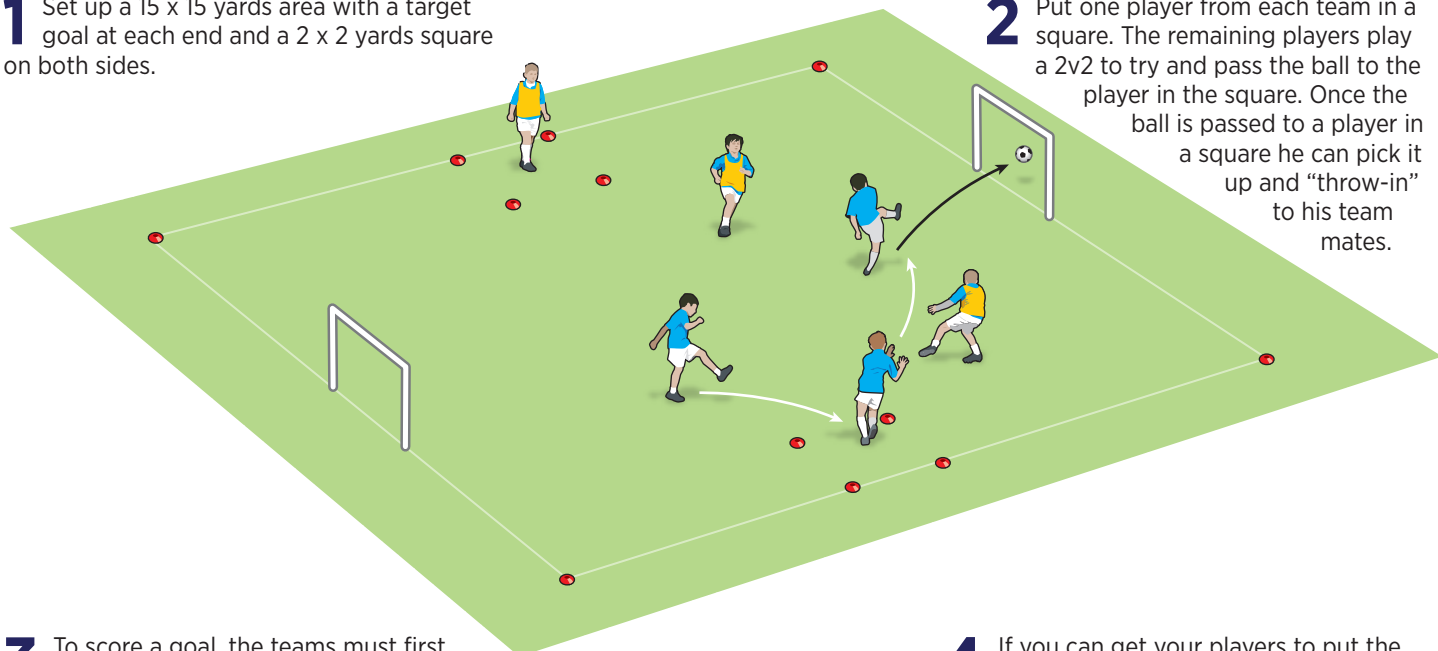
U13-U14 | RESTARTS 2

Throw-in

GAME: SCORE FROM THROW-INS

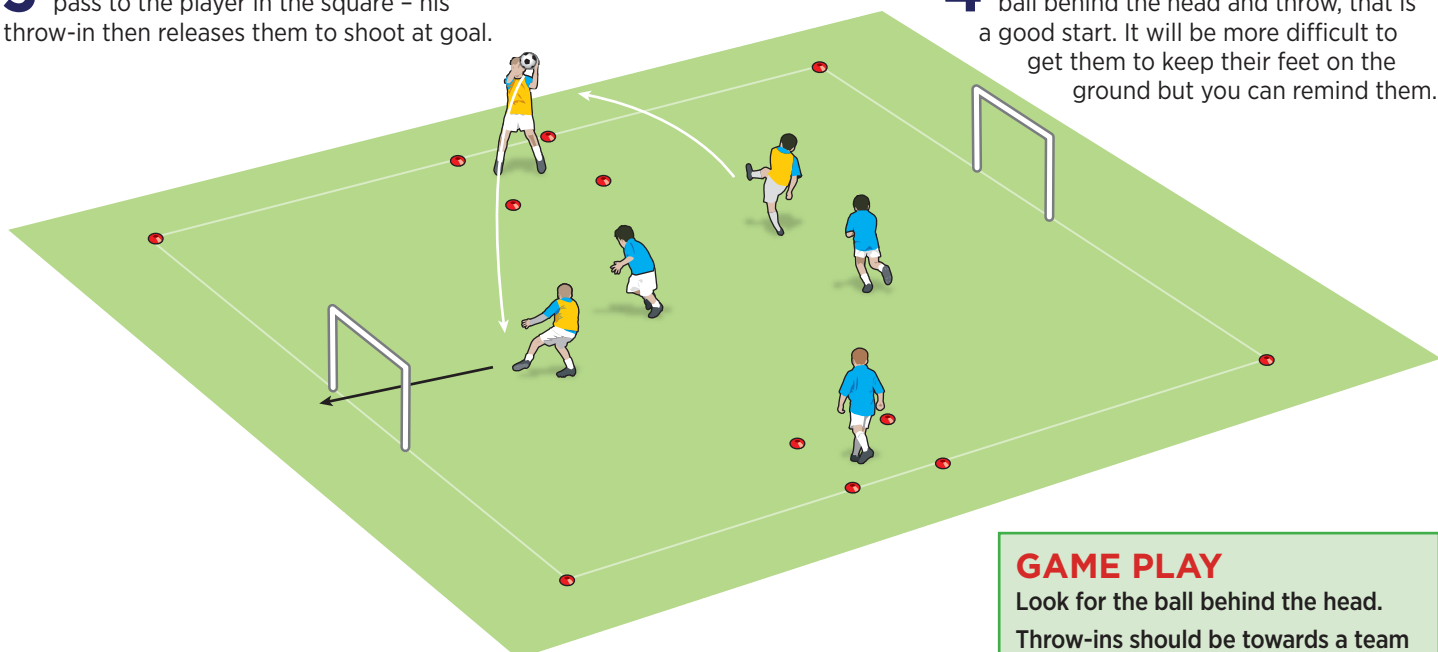
CALL OUT "Ball behind your head" • "Feet on the ground"

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
	- - - - ->	—————>

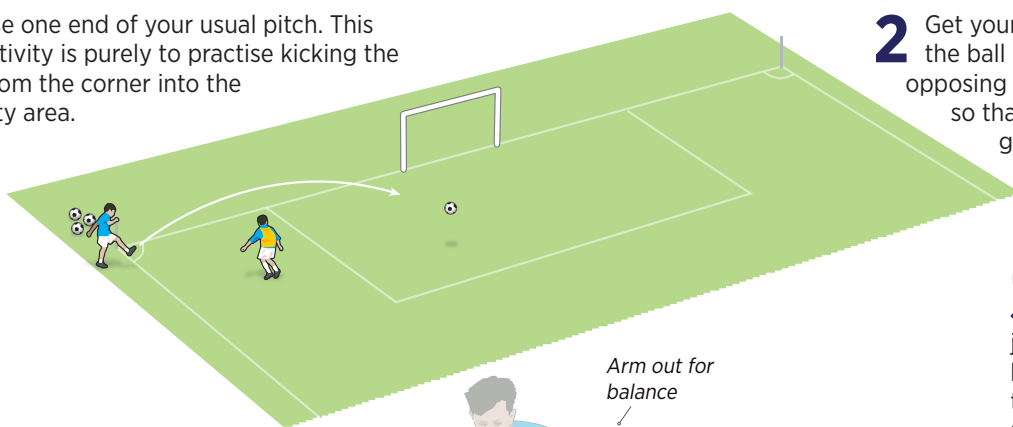
U13-U14 | RESTARTS 3

Corner kick

ACTIVITY: THE LAW

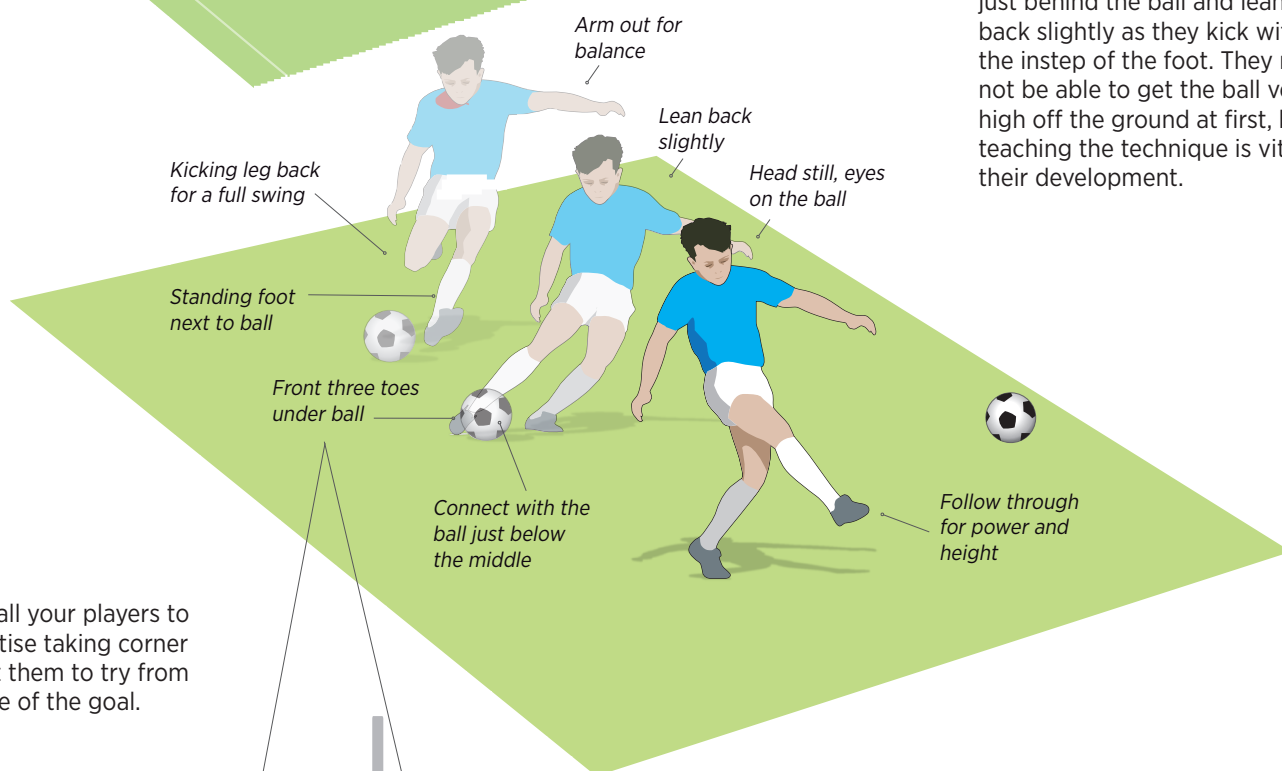
CALL OUT "Place the ball near the corner" • "Kick towards the penalty area"

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

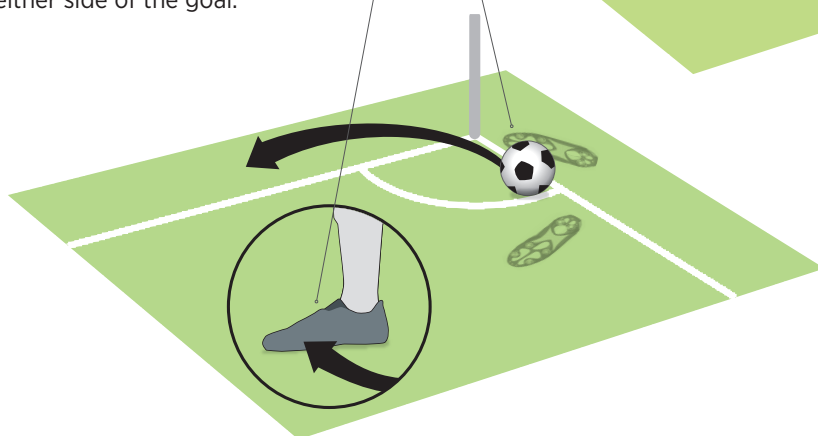


2 Get your players to take turns crossing the ball in from the corner. Put an opposing player 10 yards from the corner so that the kicker has to think about getting the ball over or past him and into the area.

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 10 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

U13-U14 | RESTARTS 3

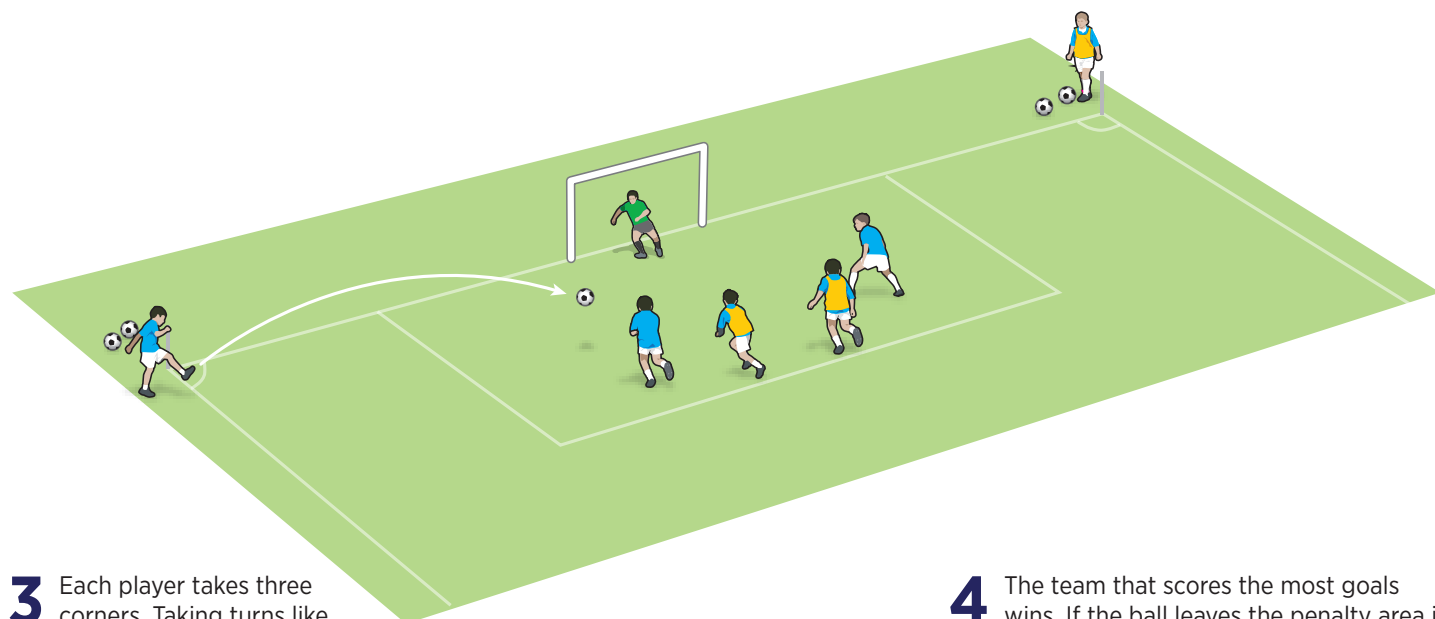
Corner kick

GAME: CORNER KICK BATTLE

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

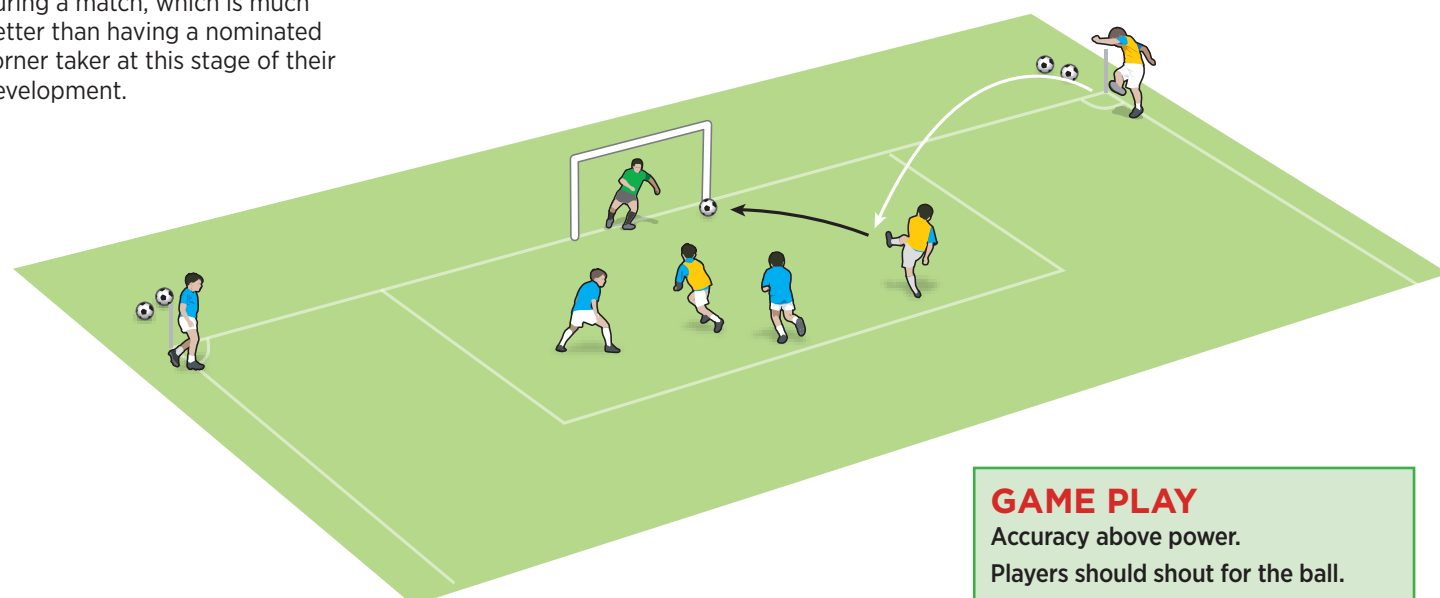
1 Use one end of your usual pitch. Put a player from each team on the two corners and put the other players in the penalty area in a 2v2.

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 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

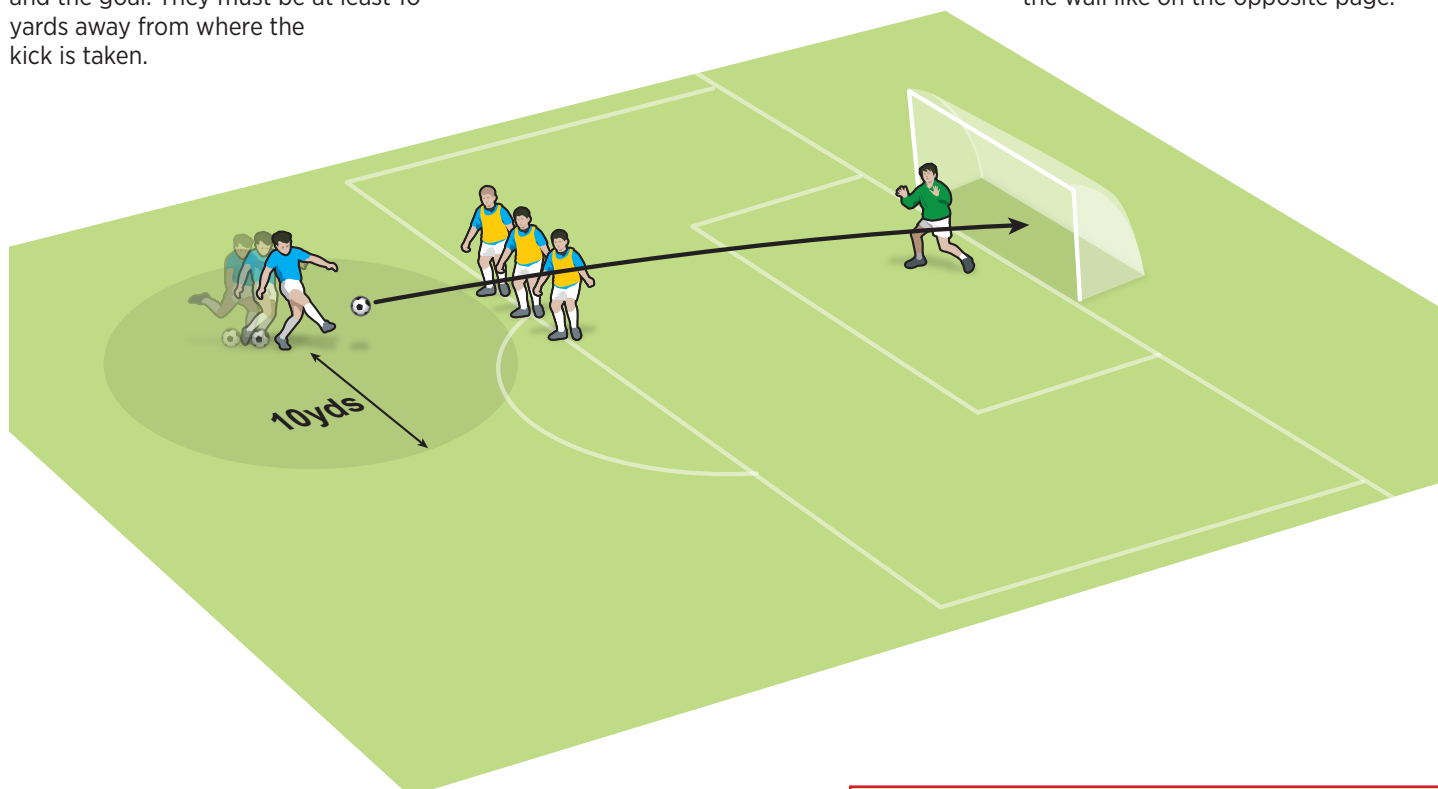
ACTIVITY: THE LAW

CALL OUT

“Understand the ball must be still when it is kicked” • “Understand one player takes the kick” • “The ball can go in any direction”

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. Put three defending players between the ball and the goal. They must be at least 10 yards away from where the kick is taken.

2 When you say “go”, the player takes the kick. Practice single free kick takers to start with then get your players to come up with clever ways to pass the ball around the wall like on the opposite page.



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 The ball: must be stationary and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

LAWS OF SOCCER

Free kick

Direct and indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player guilty of an offence or infringement.

BALL ENTERS THE GOAL

if a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded.

if an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded.

if a direct or indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded.

Until the ball is in play all opponents must remain:

At least 10 yds from the ball, unless they are on their own goal line between the goalposts.

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
	--->	→

U13-U14 | RESTARTS 4

Free kick

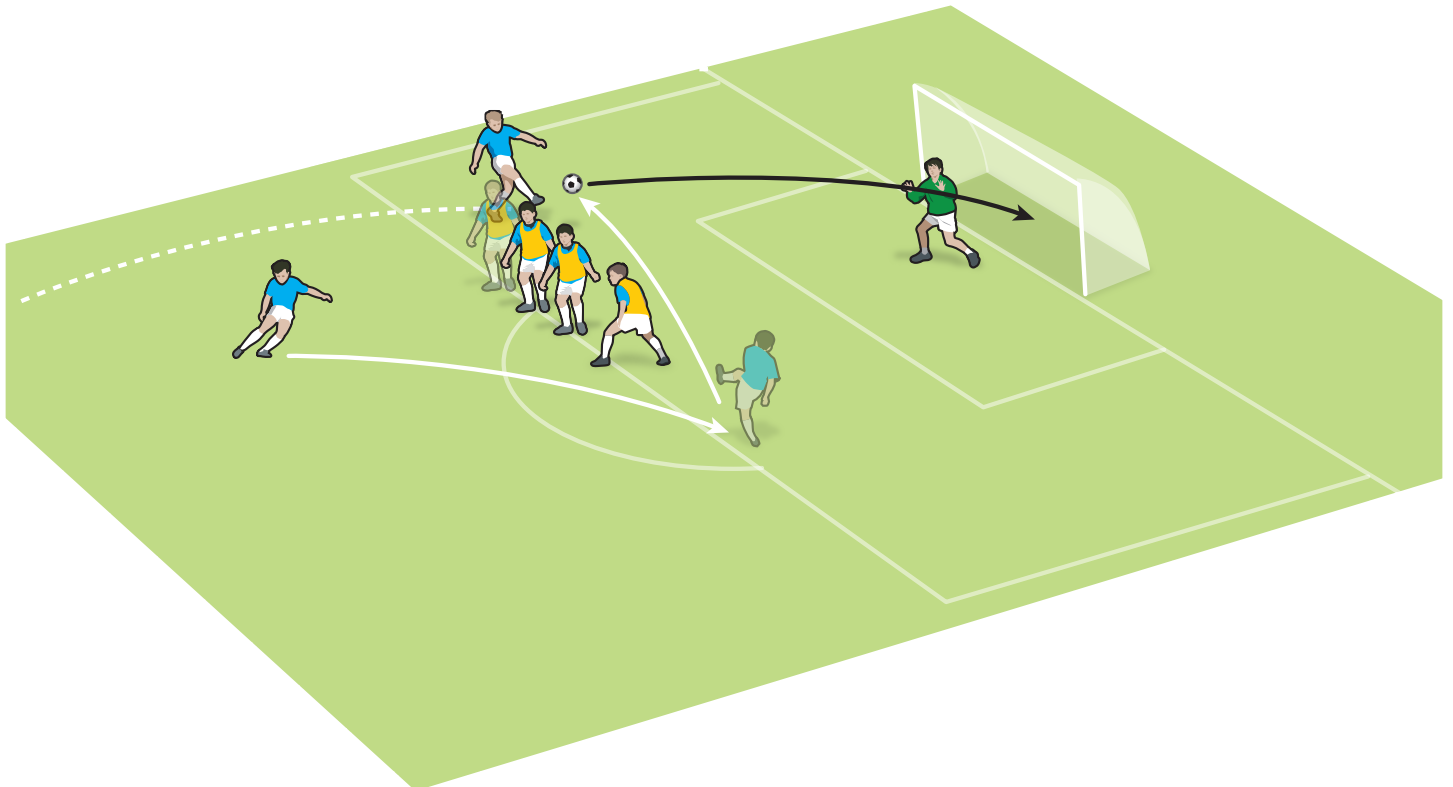
GAME: FREE KICK GAME

CALL OUT

“Understand the ball must be still when it is kicked” • “Understand one player takes the kick” • “The ball can go in any direction”

1 Use half your normal pitch taking the free kick from just outside the penalty area. You need a goalkeeper and four defenders facing three attackers.

2 Practice the free kick but explain to your players that they must stay onside and they need a late run from a player on the wing.



3 You can put players in teams and get them to come up with the best free kick routine using the players at training.

4 Remember the rules of the free kick on the opposite page – players must be 10 yards away.

5 You can turn this into a small sided game and give free kicks to both teams in different parts of the pitch.

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?

You need 8 players for this practice

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

U13-U14 | RESTARTS 5

Penalty kick

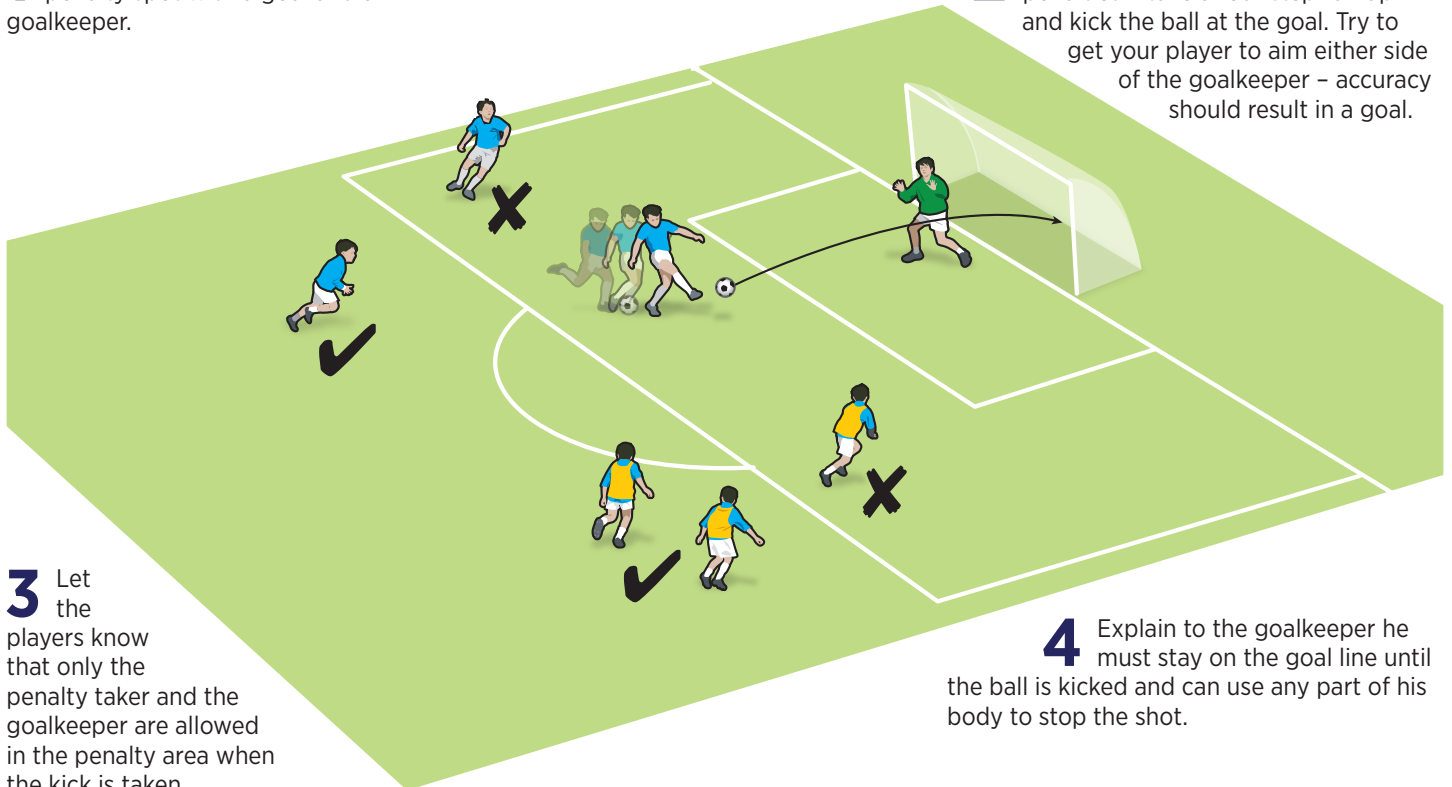
ACTIVITY: THE LAW

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.

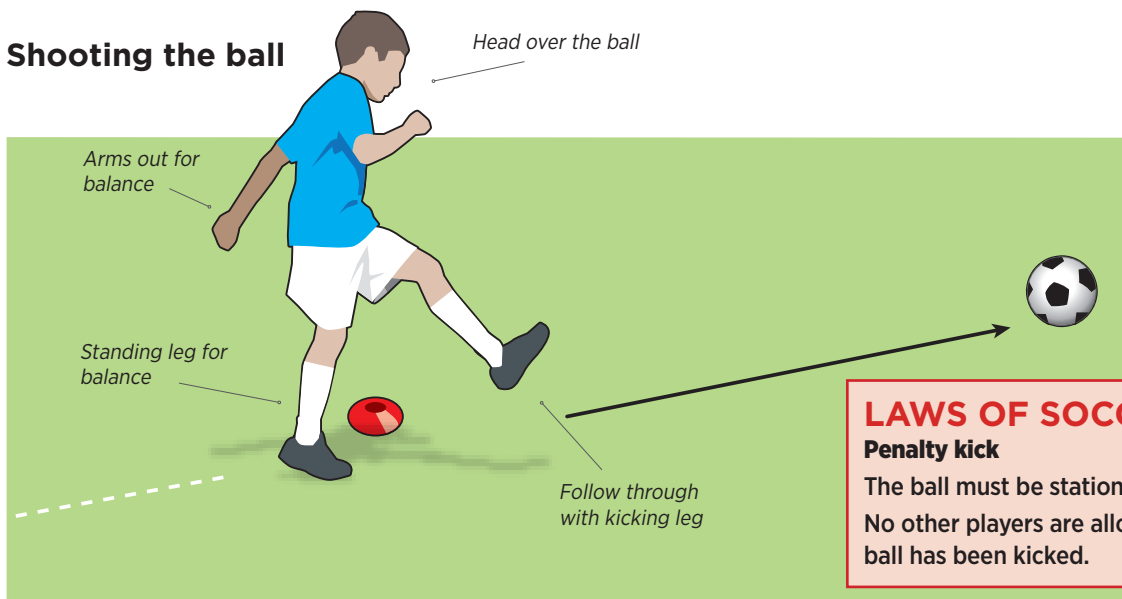
2 The players should take turns to take penalties – take a four step run up and kick the ball at the goal. Try to get your player to aim either side of the goalkeeper – accuracy should result in a goal.



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
	--->	→
	--->	→

U13-U14 | RESTARTS 5

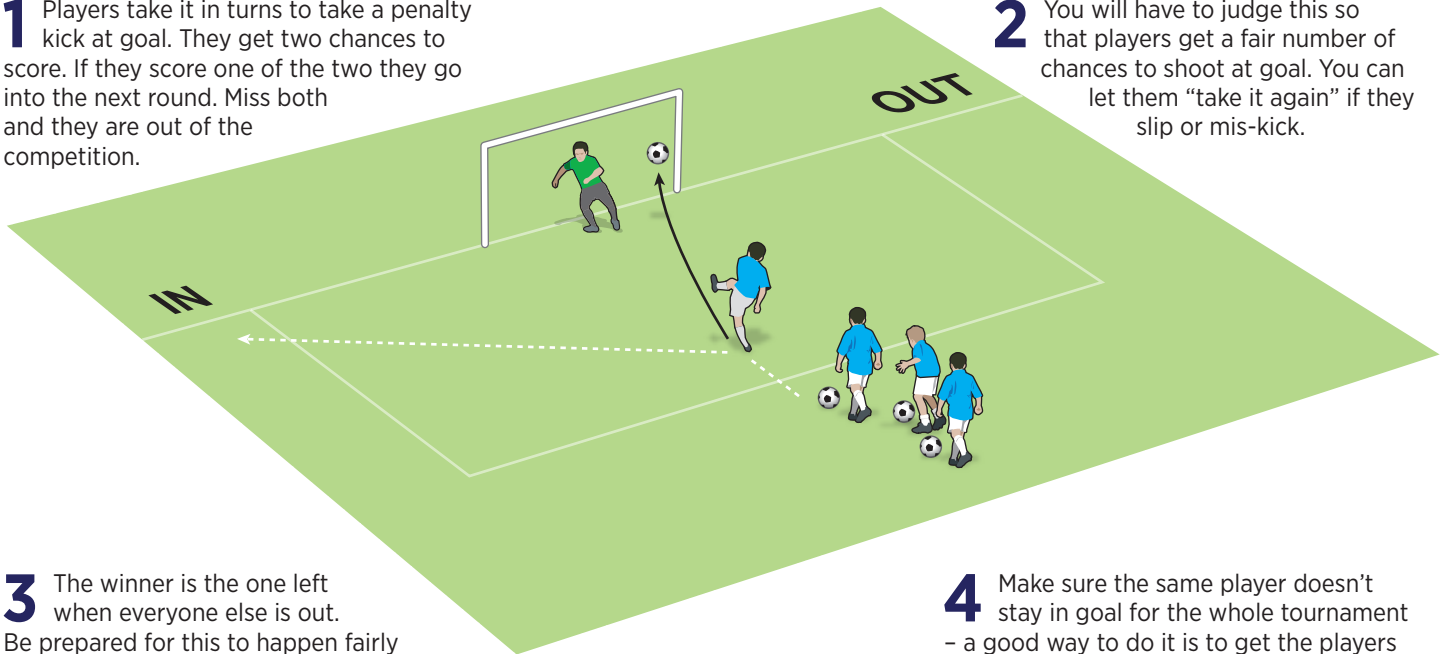
Penalty kick

GAME: IN OR OUT

CALL OUT

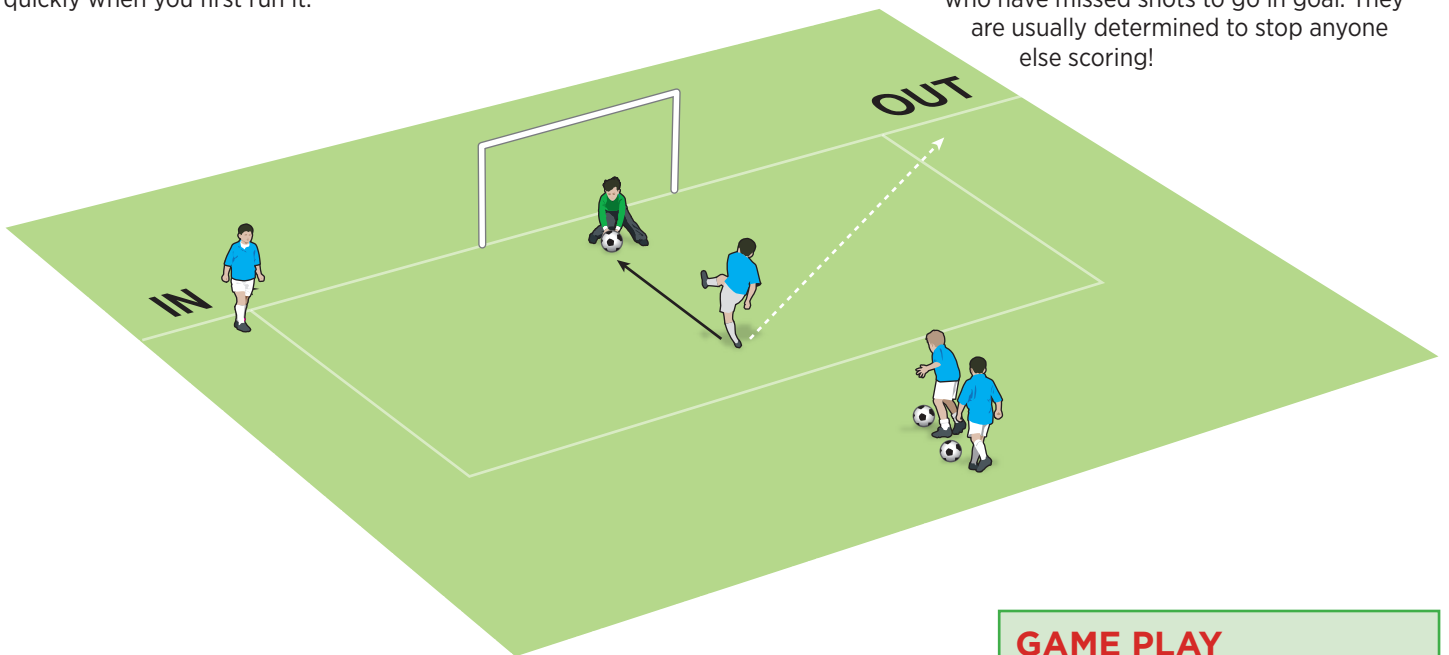
“Understand the ball is kicked from a static position” • “Understand one player takes the kick” • “Kick the ball forwards” • “Only kick the ball once”

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

U13-U14

GOALKEEPING

Correct diving technique

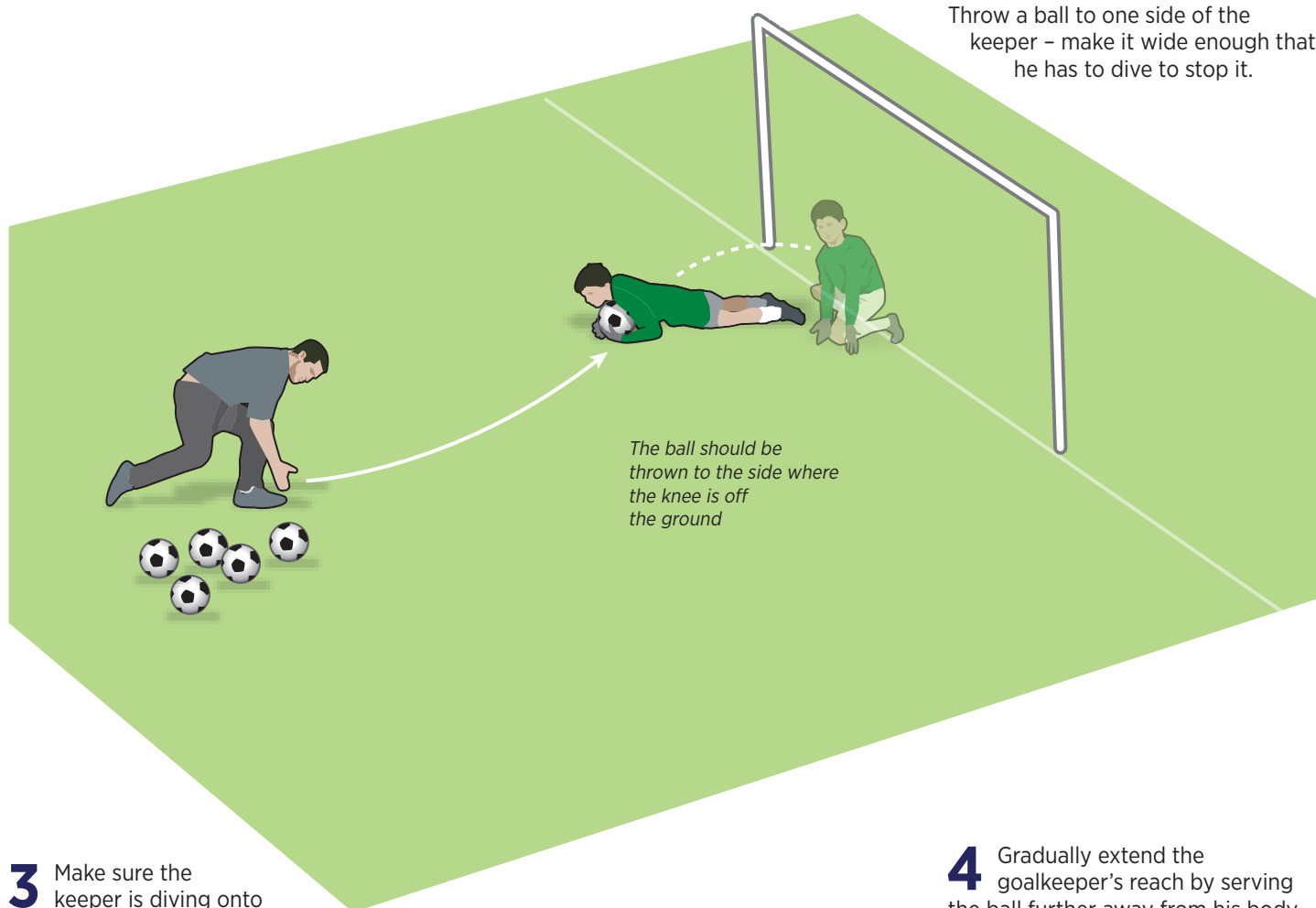
ACTIVITY: CORRECT DIVING TECHNIQUE

CALL OUT

“Stretch for the ball” • “Time your dive” • “Arms in front of you” •
“Land on your side”

1 Use the penalty area of your pitch
- have a good number of balls ready to be thrown to the keeper.

2 The goalkeeper should kneel on one knee and face you, the coach, or a nominated server. Throw a ball to one side of the keeper - make it wide enough that he has to dive to stop it.



3 Make sure the keeper is diving onto the side of his body so he can see the ball clearly.

4 Gradually extend the goalkeeper's reach by serving the ball further away from his body so he has to react more quickly and improve his diving.

How many players do I need?

Individual work with goalkeepers.

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

U13-U14 | GOALKEEPING 2

Punching the ball

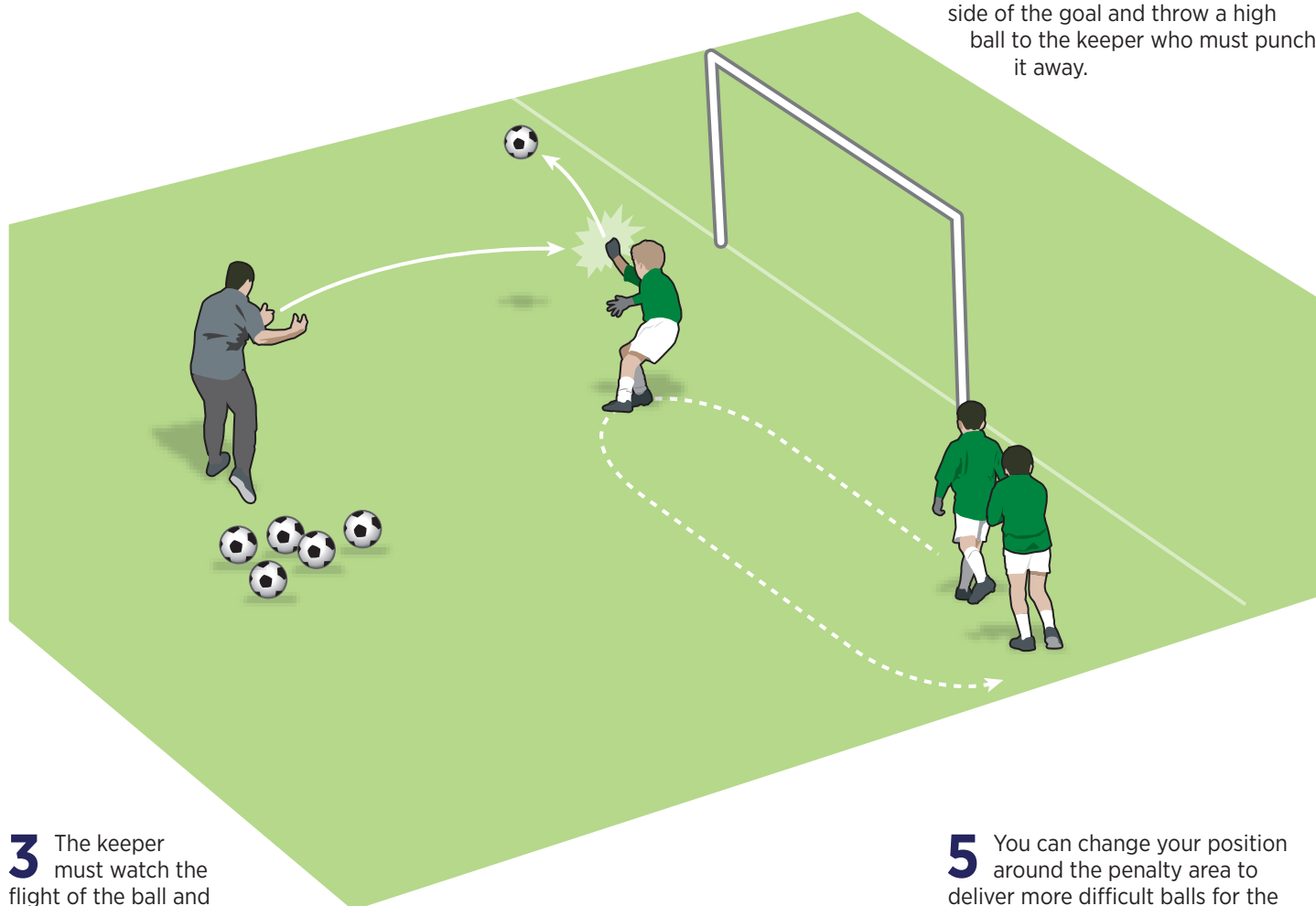
ACTIVITY: PUNCHING THE BALL

CALL OUT

“Punch high and far” • “Watch the flight of the ball” •
“Punch with one or two hands”

1 Use the penalty area of your pitch
- have a good number of balls ready to throw to the keepers.

2 Line up your keepers to the side of the goal. Get them to come forward one at a time. Stand to one side of the goal and throw a high ball to the keeper who must punch it away.



3 The keeper must watch the flight of the ball and propel himself towards it to punch right through the bottom part of the ball so it travels far and high out of the danger area.

4 After making the punch, the keeper must get to his feet quickly and run round to the back of the line.

5 You can change your position around the penalty area to deliver more difficult balls for the goalkeepers to deal with.

How many players do I need?

Work with your goalkeepers.

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

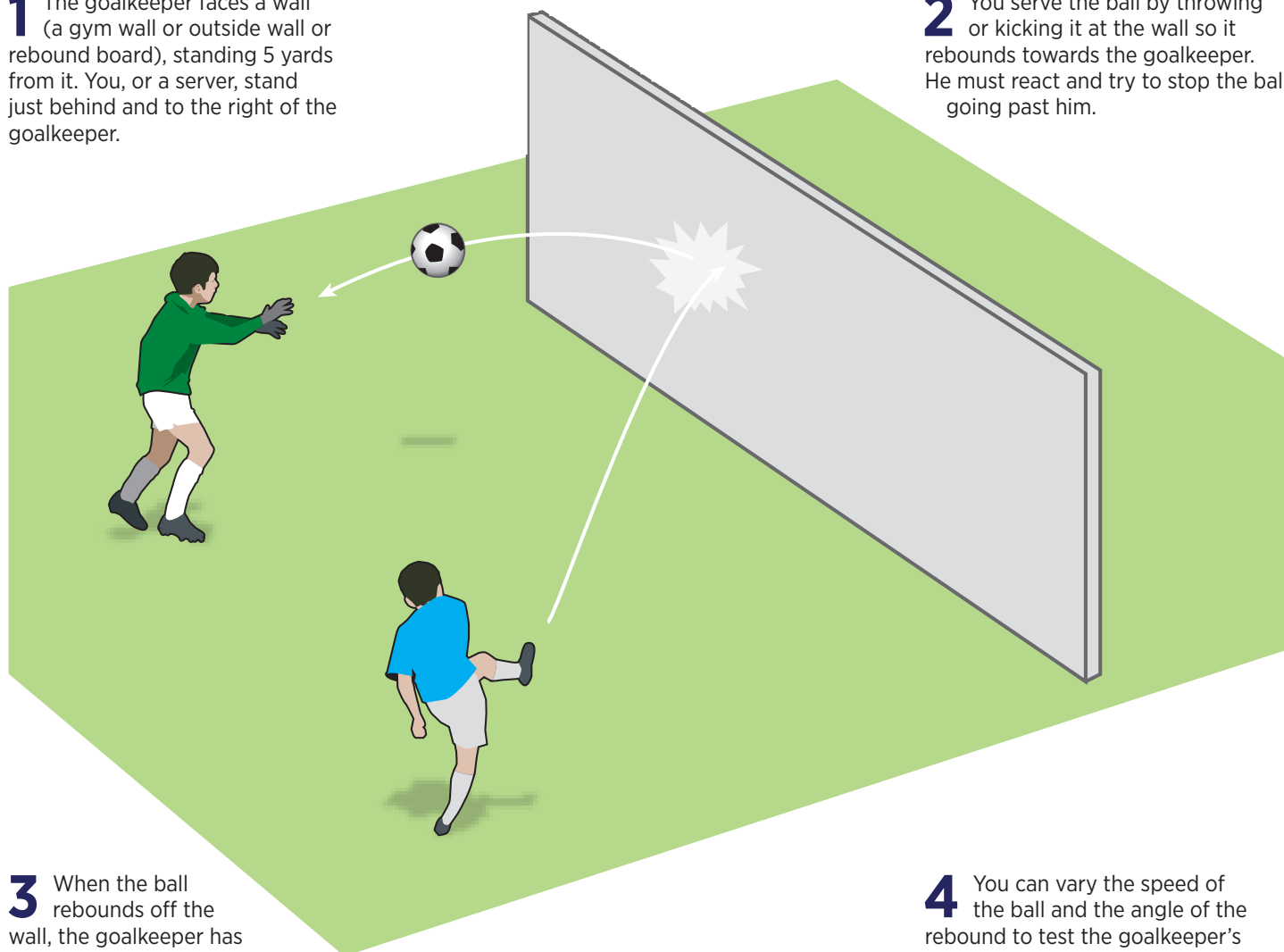
Shot stopping reactions

ACTIVITY: SHOT STOPPING REACTIONS

CALL OUT “Concentrate on the ball” • “React to the bounce” • “Don’t let the ball beat you”

1 The goalkeeper faces a wall (a gym wall or outside wall or rebound board), standing 5 yards from it. You, or a server, stand just behind and to the right of the goalkeeper.

2 You serve the ball by throwing or kicking it at the wall so it rebounds towards the goalkeeper. He must react and try to stop the ball going past him.



3 When the ball rebounds off the wall, the goalkeeper has to move or dive quickly to stop the ball by catching it or by pushing the ball away. After each save, the keeper must return the ball to you and prepare for the next rebound.

4 You can vary the speed of the ball and the angle of the rebound to test the goalkeeper’s reactions fully. You can also move him closer to the wall to give him less time to react.

How many players do I need?

Individual work with goalkeepers – or goalkeepers can work in pairs and alternate roles of keeper and server.

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

U13-U14 | GOALKEEPING 4

Quick reactions and positioning

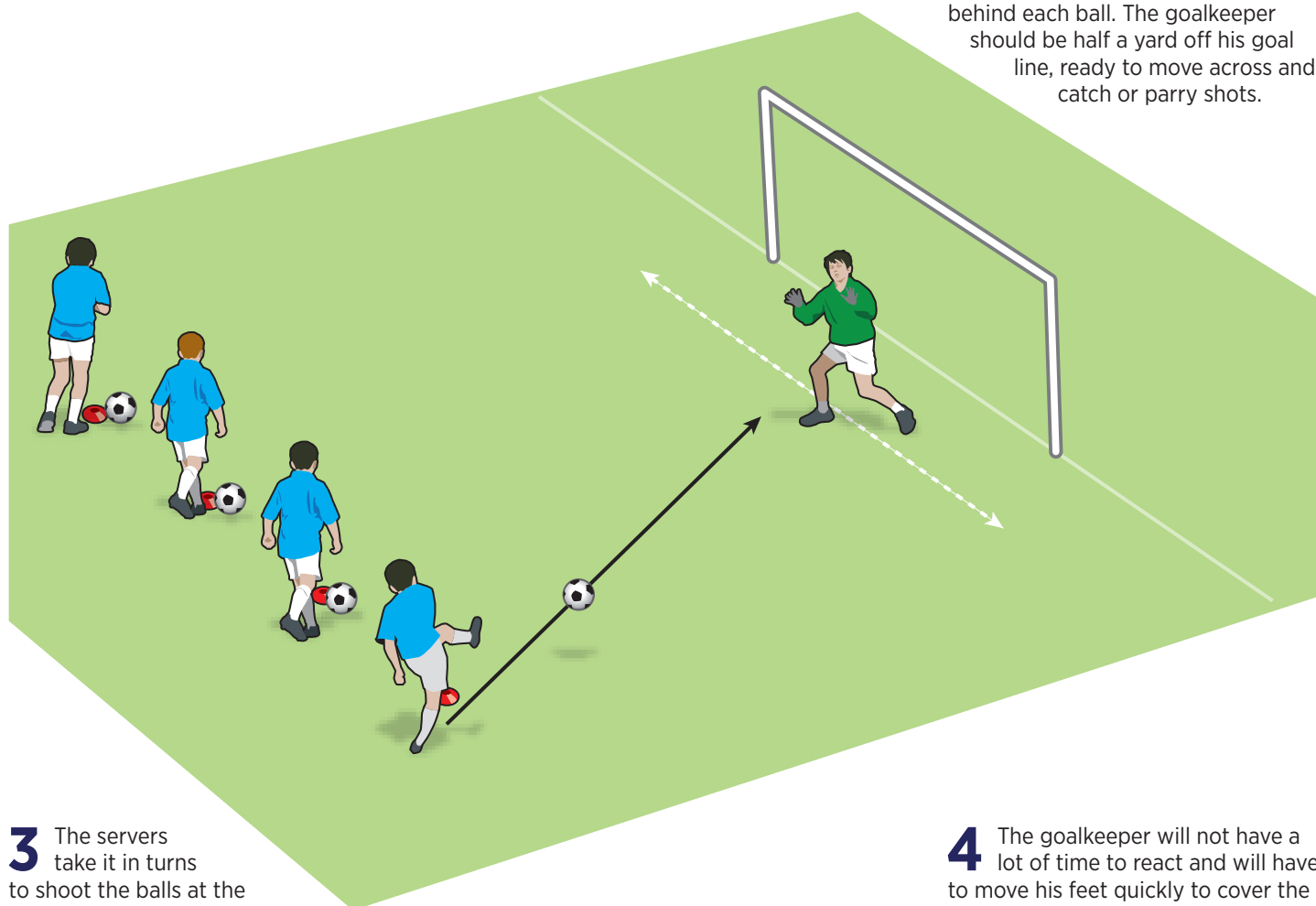
ACTIVITY: QUICK REACTIONS AND POSITIONING

CALL OUT

“On the balls of your feet ready to pounce” • “Block the shot with hands or feet” • “Don’t let the ball beat you”

1 Set up in the penalty area of your normal pitch. You need a goal and several balls.

2 Line up the balls across the width of the penalty area, about 8 yards from the goal. Put a server behind each ball. The goalkeeper should be half a yard off his goal line, ready to move across and catch or parry shots.



3 The servers take it in turns to shoot the balls at the keeper until all the balls have been used – they can choose any of the balls when it is their turn to shoot.

4 The goalkeeper will not have a lot of time to react and will have to move his feet quickly to cover the shots coming in at different angles.

How many players do I need?

Individual work with goalkeepers plus servers – this is a good opportunity for your strikers to practise their shooting.

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

U13-U14 | GOALKEEPING 5

Gather a rolling ball

ACTIVITY: THE LONG BARRIER

CALL OUT

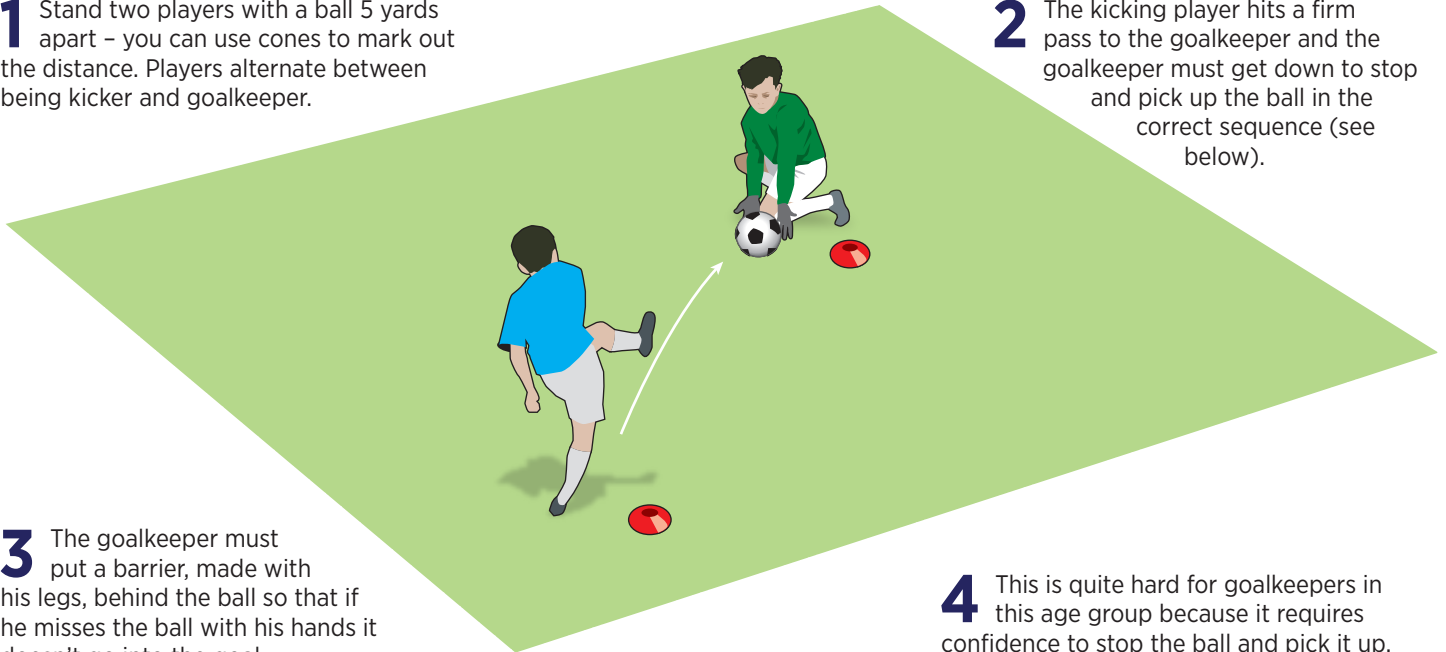
“Use a long leg as a barrier behind your hands” • “Pick the ball up” •
“Clutch it to your chest”

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.

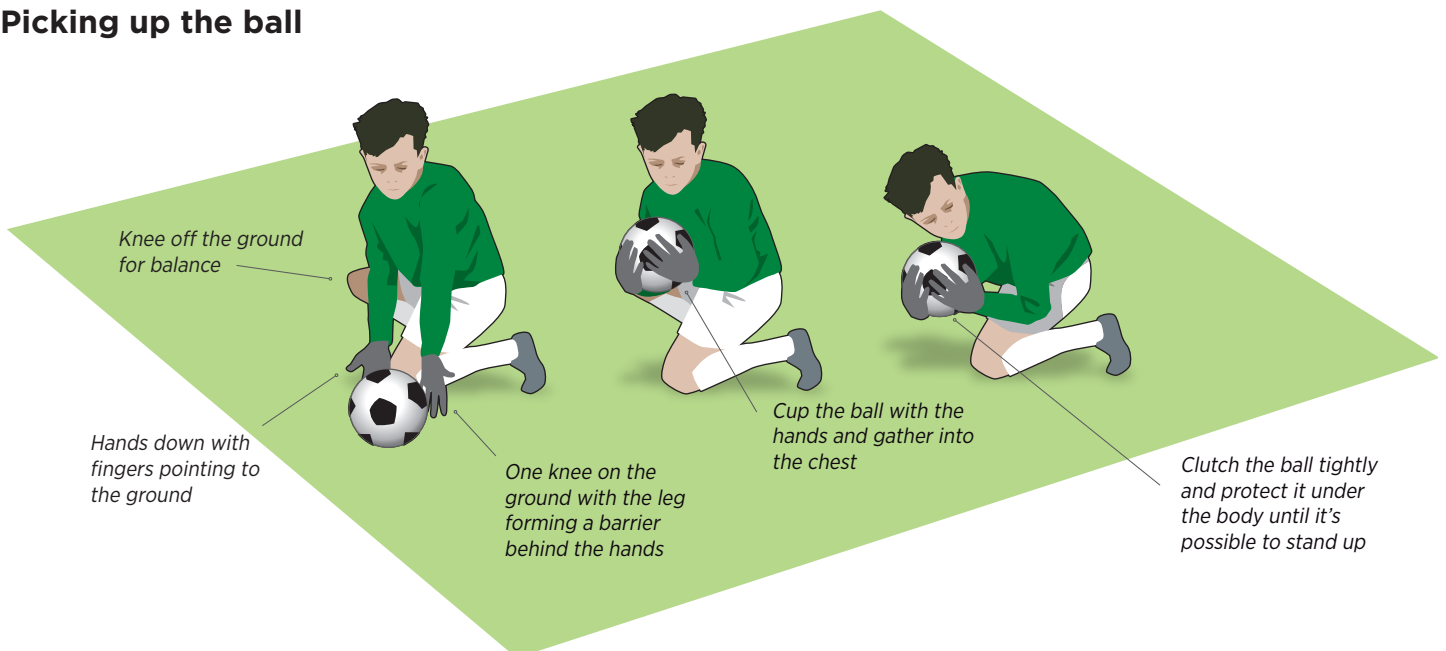
2 The kicking player hits a firm pass to the goalkeeper and the goalkeeper must get down to stop and pick up the ball in the correct sequence (see below).

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?

Individual work with a goalkeeper and a server.

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

Run with the ball Shot

Goalie wars

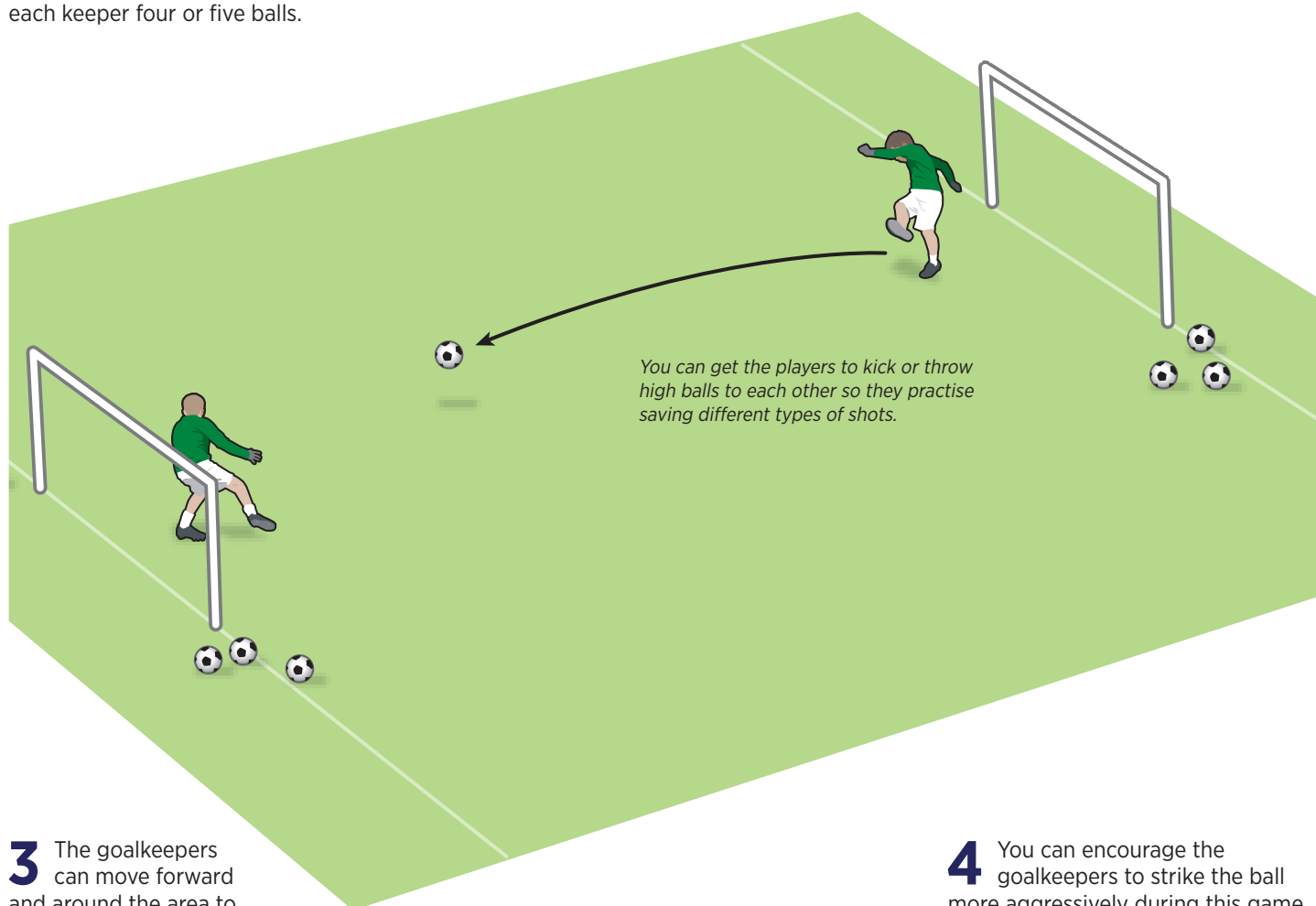
GAME: SAVE AND DISTRIBUTE

CALL OUT

“Kick with accuracy” • “Try to score” • “Use good gathering technique” •
“Remember the long barrier”

1 Set up a 10 x 10 yards area with a portable goal at each end. Put a goalkeeper in each goal and give each keeper four or five balls.

2 The goalkeepers take turns to kick towards the opposite goal and try to score.



3 The goalkeepers can move forward and around the area to retrieve any wayward balls. If they gather one close to the goal they can try and throw it into their opponent's net.

4 You can encourage the goalkeepers to strike the ball more aggressively during this game, which not only gives them good shot stopping practice but also helps with goal-kicking technique.

GAME PLAY

Cover the goal.
Try power shots.
Use good technique.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

Key Player movement

----->

Run with the ball

----->

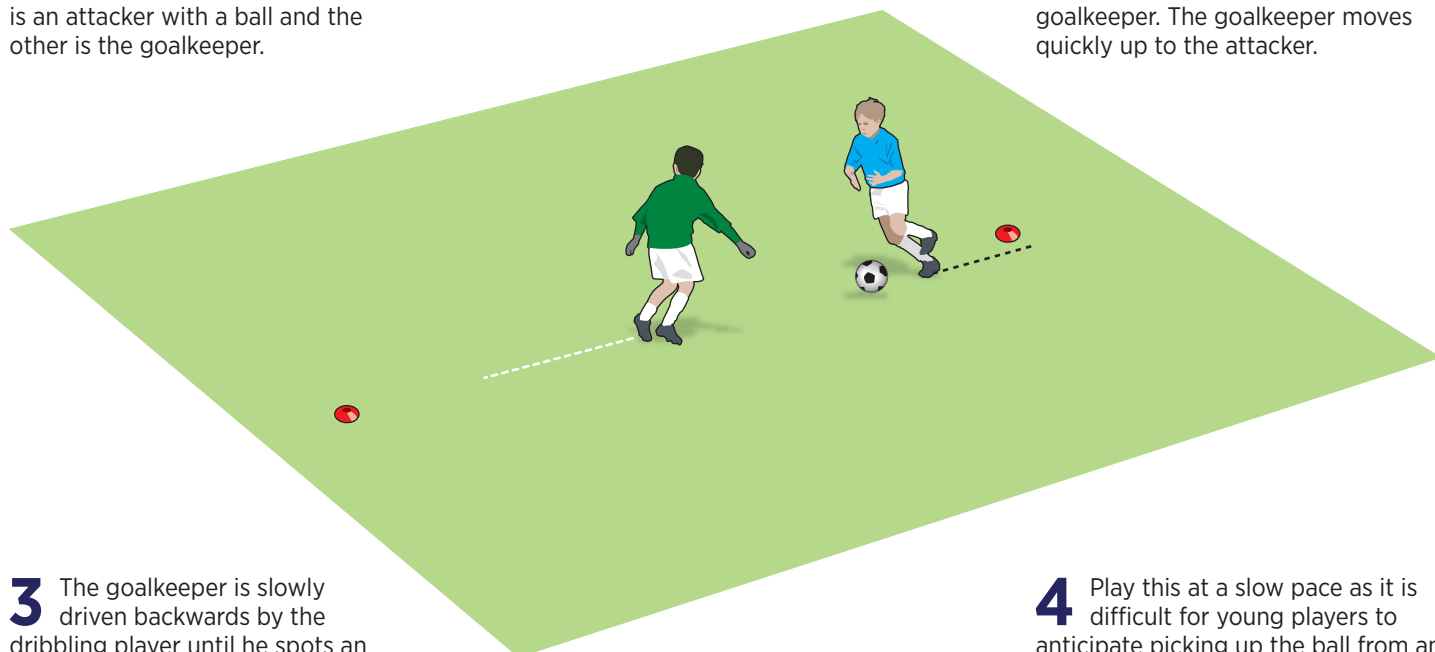
Stop a ball at a striker's feet

ACTIVITY: STOPPING A BALL AT STRIKER'S FEET

CALL OUT

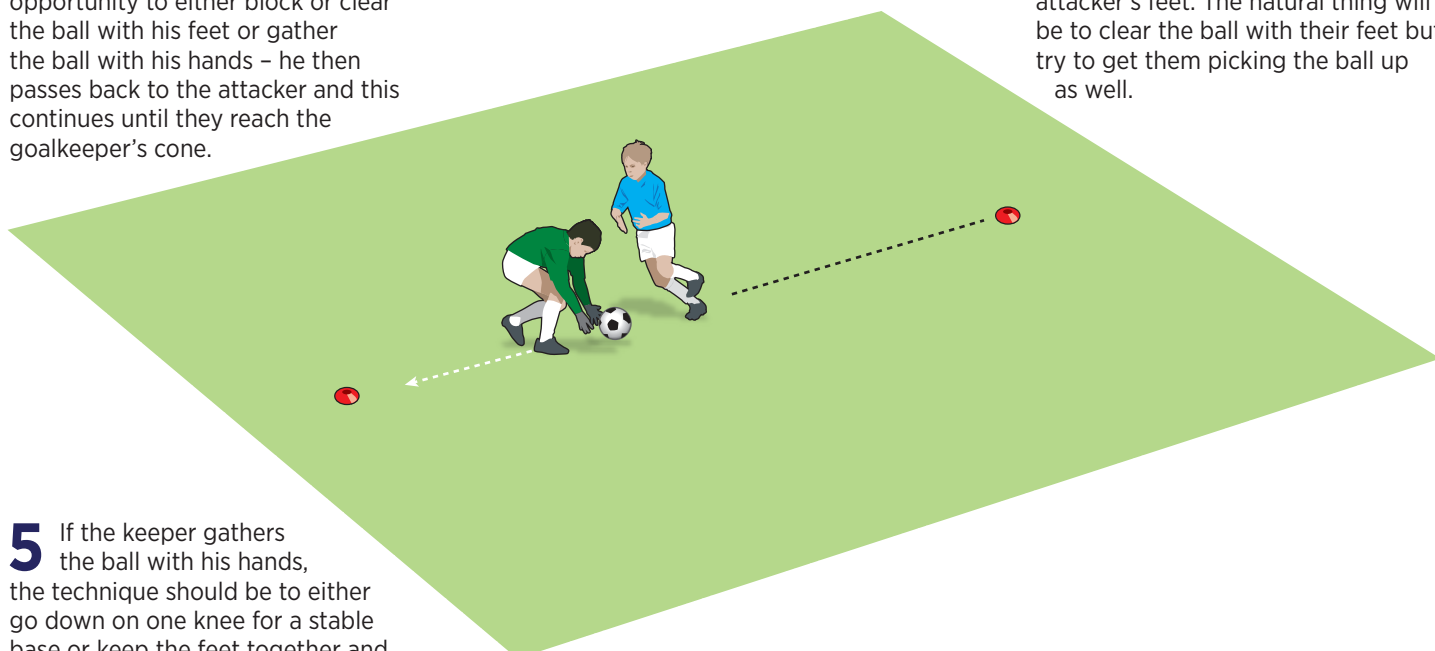
“Choose your moment to block the ball” • “Gather it with your hands” •
“Clear it with your feet”

1 Place two cones 8 yards apart with a player on each cone – one is an attacker with a ball and the other is the goalkeeper.



2 The attacker starts with the ball, dribbling towards the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper moves quickly up to the attacker.

3 The goalkeeper is slowly driven backwards by the dribbling player until he spots an opportunity to either block or clear the ball with his feet or gather the ball with his hands – he then passes back to the attacker and this continues until they reach the goalkeeper's cone.



4 Play this at a slow pace as it is difficult for young players to anticipate picking up the ball from an attacker's feet. The natural thing will be to clear the ball with their feet but try to get them picking the ball up as well.

5 If the keeper gathers the ball with his hands, the technique should be to either go down on one knee for a stable base or keep the feet together and bend to scoop the ball up.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U13-U14 | GOALKEEPING 8

Stop the striker 1v1

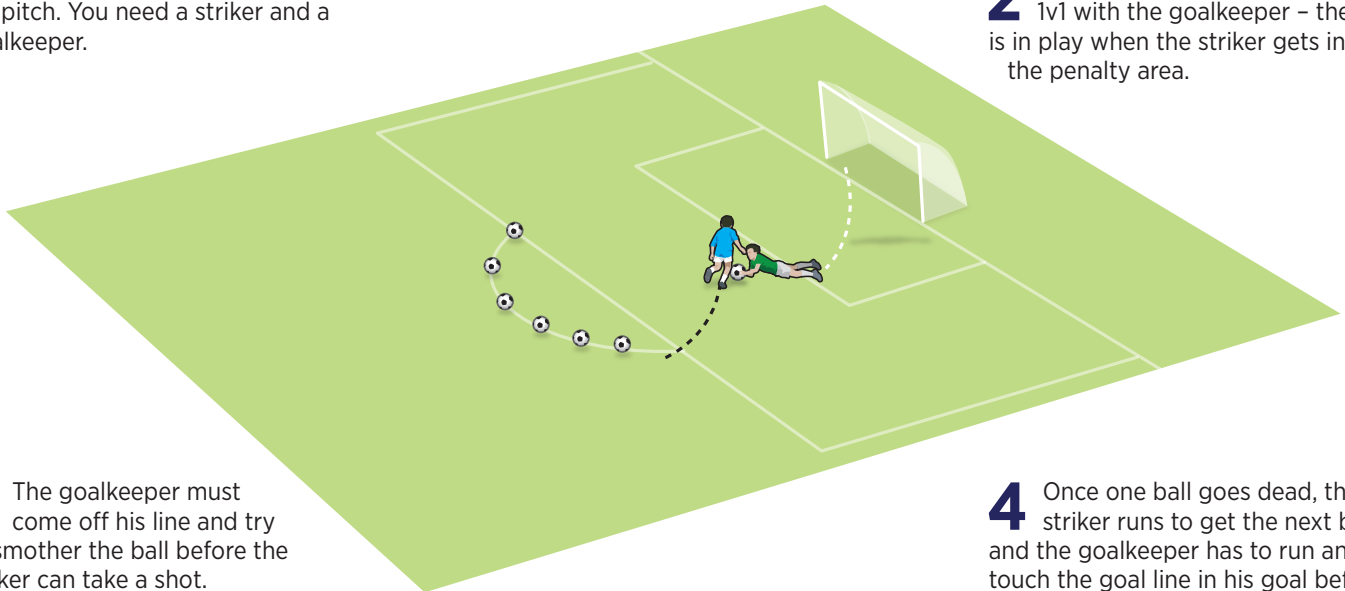
GAME: CLEAN SHEET

CALL OUT

“Come off your line” • “Race back to your line” • “Turn and face the attacker” • “Speed is the goalkeeper’s friend and the attacker’s enemy”

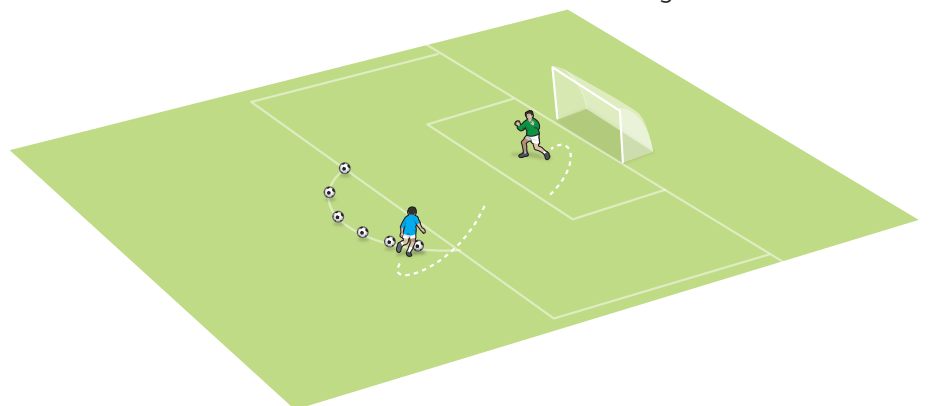
1 Use the penalty area of your pitch. You need a striker and a goalkeeper.

2 The striker has seven balls to go 1v1 with the goalkeeper – the ball is in play when the striker gets into the penalty area.

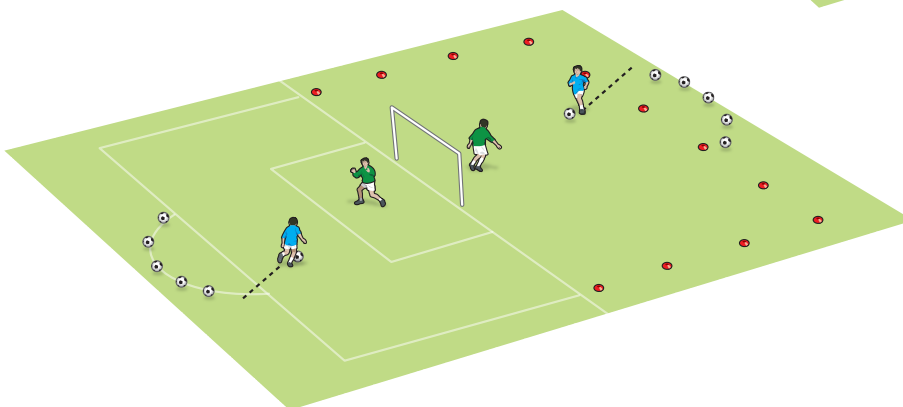


3 The goalkeeper must come off his line and try to smother the ball before the striker can take a shot.

4 Once one ball goes dead, the striker runs to get the next ball and the goalkeeper has to run and touch the goal line in his goal before facing the next attack.



5 If you have two keepers, remove the net and run back-to-back sessions.



GAME PLAY

Quick reactions.
Good positioning.
Determination to get the ball.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

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

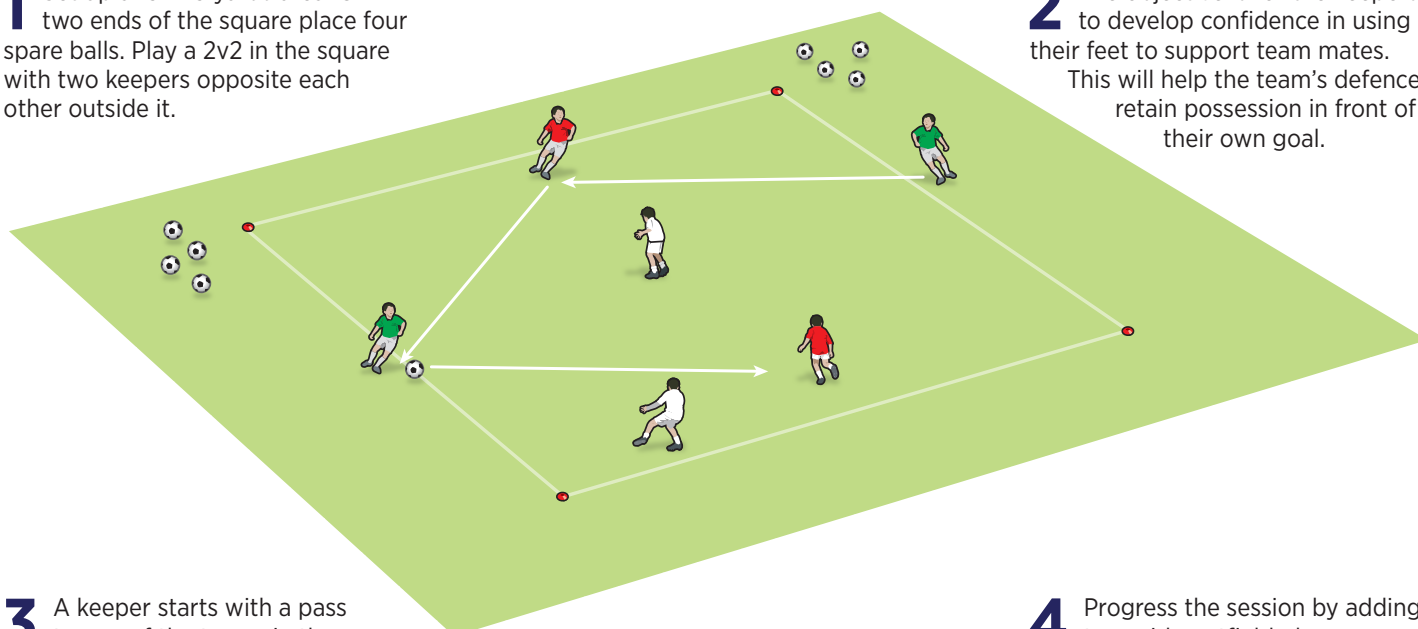
Footwork matters most

ACTIVITY: KEEPER FEET

CALL OUT

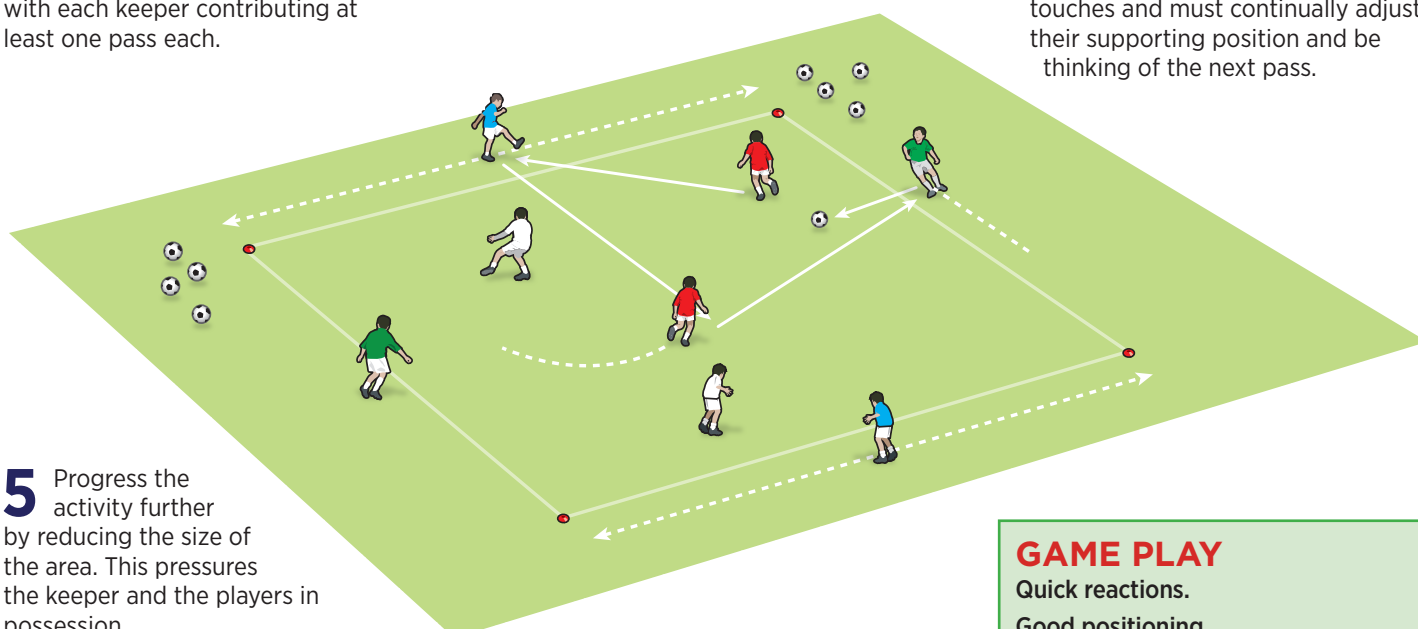
“Good first touch” • “Pass to the keeper” • “Accurate passing” • “Good weight of pass or lose the ball”

1 Set up a 15 x 15 yards area. On two ends of the square place four spare balls. Play a 2v2 in the square with two keepers opposite each other outside it.



2 The objective is for the keepers to develop confidence in using their feet to support team mates. This will help the team's defence retain possession in front of their own goal.

3 A keeper starts with a pass to one of the teams in the square – keepers play for the team in possession. Points are awarded if a team makes five consecutive passes with each keeper contributing at least one pass each.



4 Progress the session by adding two wide outfield players, one on either side. The wide players also play for the team in possession. The keepers are now limited to just two touches and must continually adjust their supporting position and be thinking of the next pass.

5 Progress the activity further by reducing the size of the area. This pressures the keeper and the players in possession.

GAME PLAY

- Quick reactions.
- Good positioning.
- Determination to get the ball.

How many players do I need?

We used six players plus two in the development.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U13-U14 | GOALKEEPING 10

Playing as a sweeper

GAME: SWEEPER KEEPER

CALL OUT

“Concentrate on where the ball is” • “Move to intercept passes” • “Run with the ball if there is space” • “Recover to block long passes”

1 Set up a 35 x 20 yards area with 10-yard zones at each end and a 15-yard centre zone. Play 3v3, with goalkeepers in the end zones and two players from each team in the centre zone.

2 Play starts and restarts with the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper brings the ball out, spots a team mate in space and plays a quick pass.

3 After making the initial pass, the goalkeeper can move into the centre zone while his team has possession, to play a 3v2. If his team loses possession he must return to the end zone.

4 Players can only go into the goalkeeper zones when their team has possession. Here the red keeper intercepts the white team's attack, enabling him to set up a counter-attack before the white keeper can get back to his goal.





5 This is a great way to integrate your goalkeepers into a session, so they are involved with the attacks, but they also have to be quick to recover if they lose possession. It's a fast game so rest players often.

GAME PLAY

React to the position of the ball.
Quick play from interceptions.
Remember first and foremost
YOU'RE THE KEEPER!

How many players do I need?

We used six players in this game.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
		
		

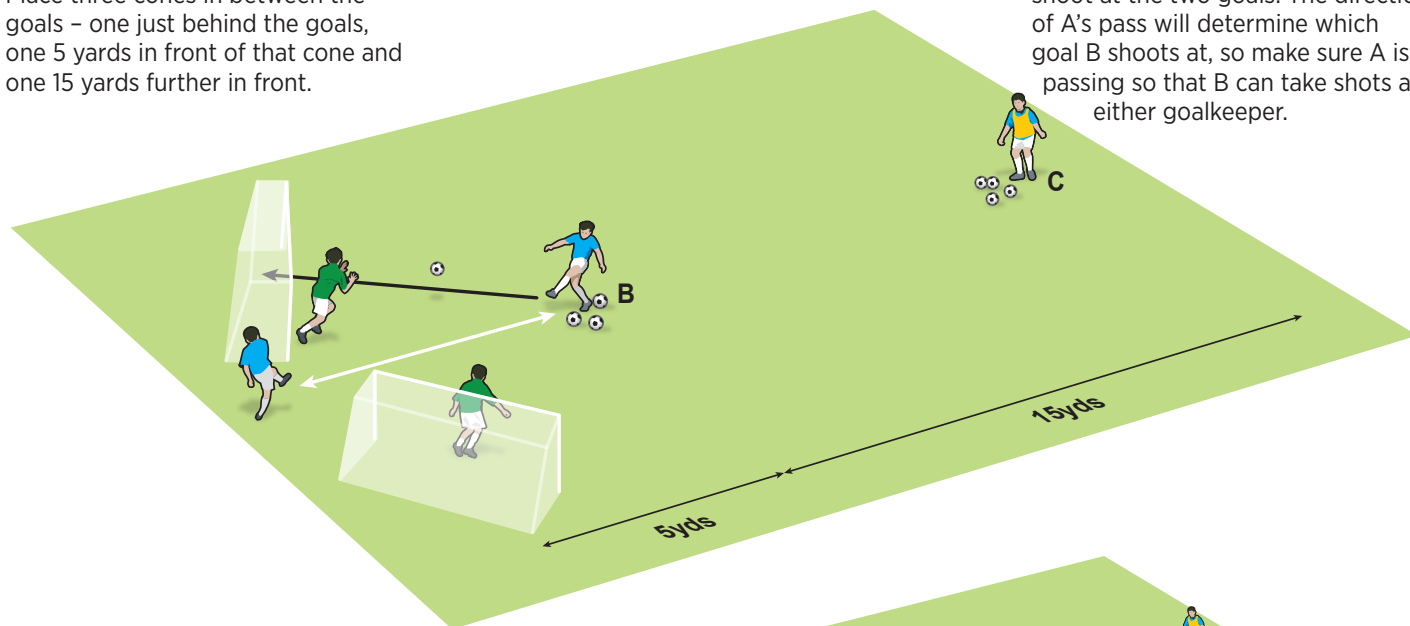
Survive the chaos

ACTIVITY: GOALKEEPER REACTIONS

CALL OUT

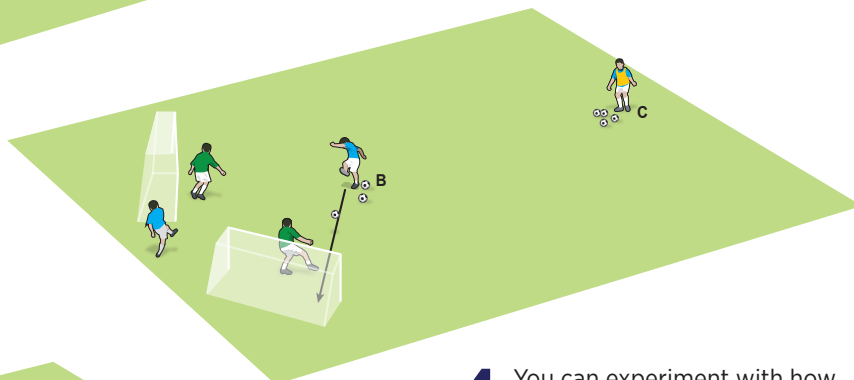
“Be aware” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “React quickly to the second shot” • “Be on the balls of your feet ready to react”

1 Set the two goals up at an angle with a goalkeeper in each goal. Place three cones in between the goals – one just behind the goals, one 5 yards in front of that cone and one 15 yards further in front.

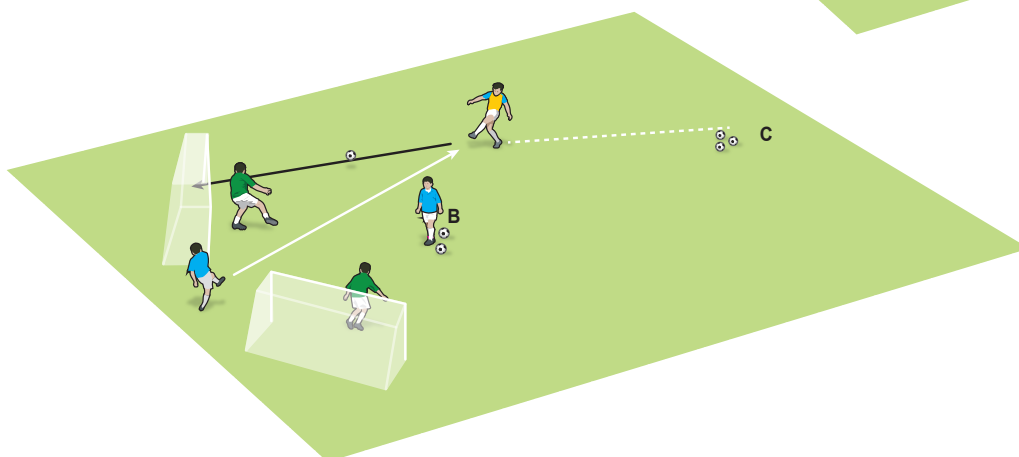


2 Player B passes a ball to player A who fires it back to B so he can shoot at the two goals. The direction of A's pass will determine which goal B shoots at, so make sure A is passing so that B can take shots at either goalkeeper.

3 The keepers must read the position of the ball and react quickly. As soon as that shot has been fired, player C moves the ball to one side or the other and takes a long shot.



4 You can experiment with how far away you want C to stand so the shots are of good power and accuracy.



5 Make sure C is shooting at both goals in turn – B can deflect C's shot at the goal to add difficulty.

How many players do I need?

We used five players – three working players and two goalkeepers.

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

U13-U14 | GOALKEEPING 12

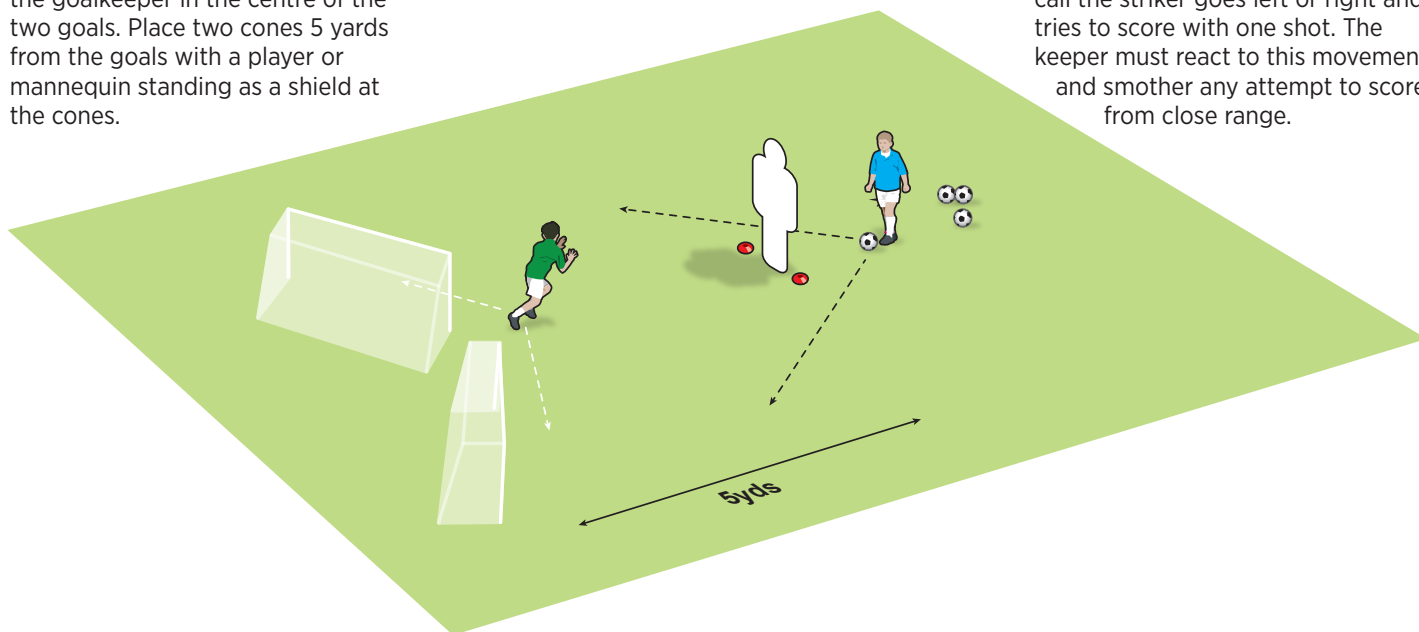
Move and block

ACTIVITY: COVER SHOTS CLOSE TO GOAL

CALL OUT

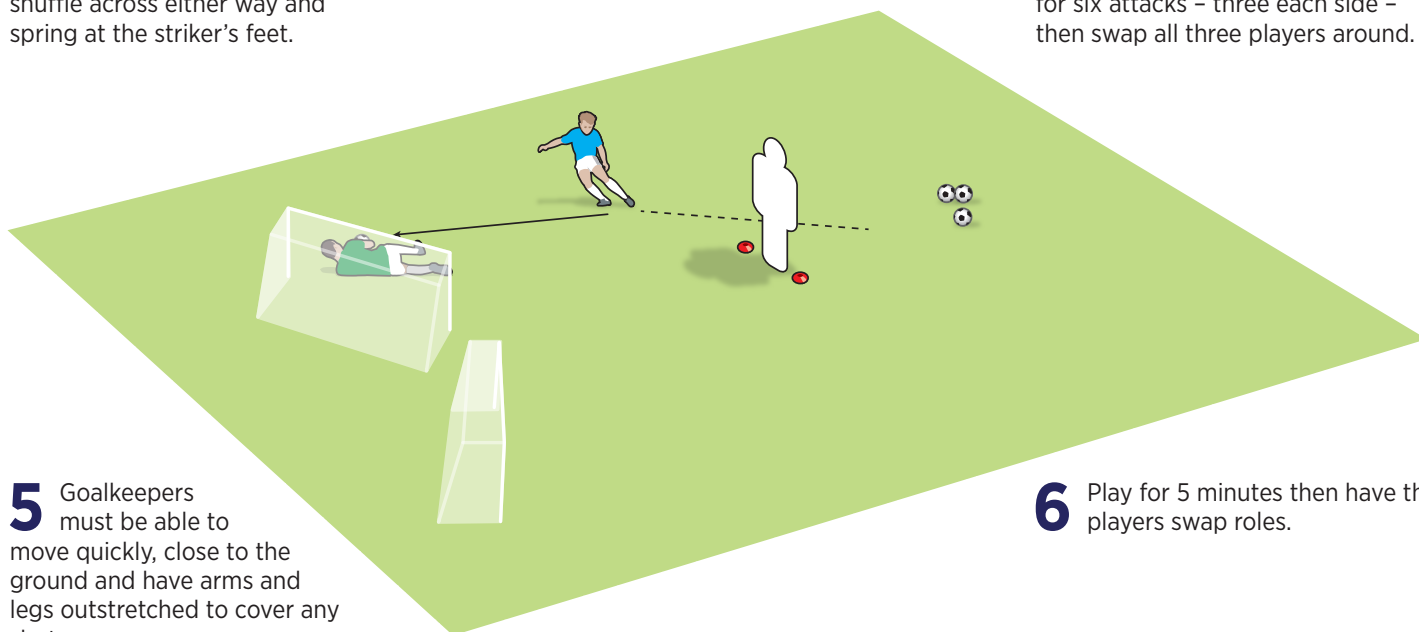
“Be aware” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “React quickly to the shot” • “Be in a crouching position to move across the goals quickly”

1 Set up two target goals side by side angled slightly away from the goalkeeper in the centre of the two goals. Place two cones 5 yards from the goals with a player or mannequin standing as a shield at the cones.



2 The striker hides behind the shield with some balls. On your call the striker goes left or right and tries to score with one shot. The keeper must react to this movement and smother any attempt to score from close range.

3 The goalkeeper is defending two goals so must crouch low with bent knees ready to shuffle across either way and spring at the striker's feet.



4 Make sure the striker doesn't follow up as play is close to the keeper and he may get hurt. Do this for six attacks – three each side – then swap all three players around.

5 Goalkeepers must be able to move quickly, close to the ground and have arms and legs outstretched to cover any shots.

6 Play for 5 minutes then have the players swap roles.

How many players do I need?

We used two players a goalkeeper and striker.

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

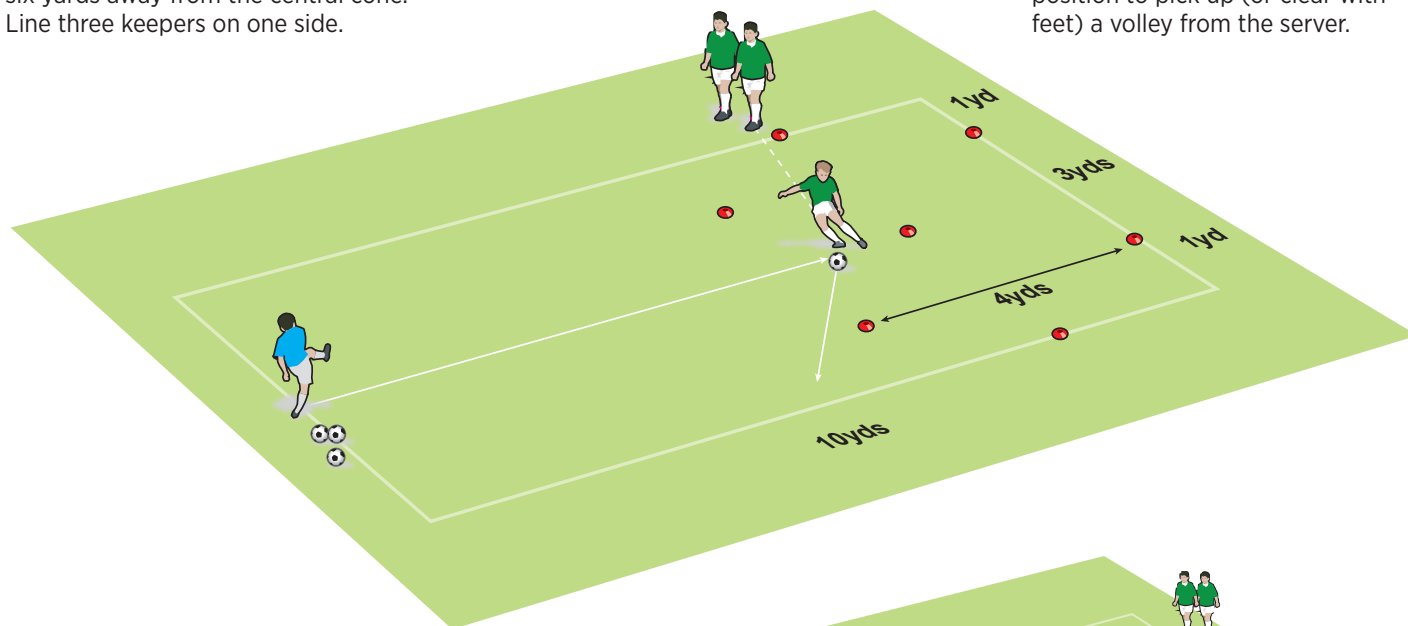
Face the striker

ACTIVITY: REACTING TO SHOTS

CALL OUT

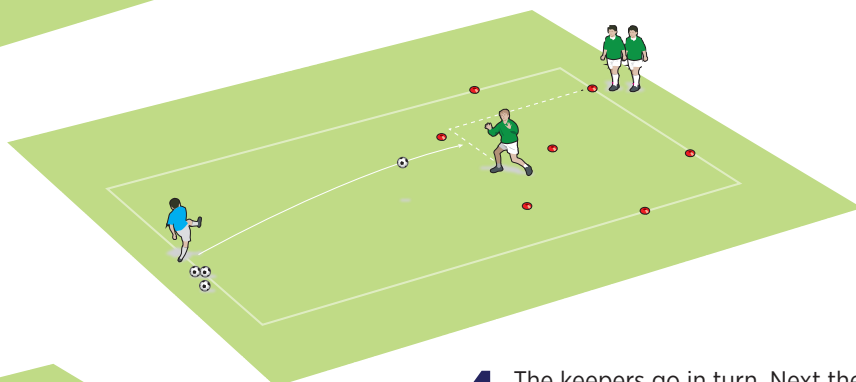
“Keep your eyes on the ball” • “React quickly to the shot” • “Get your body behind the ball to stop the shot”

1 Set up a 10 x 5 yards area, with cones as shown. A server stands six yards away from the central cone. Line three keepers on one side.

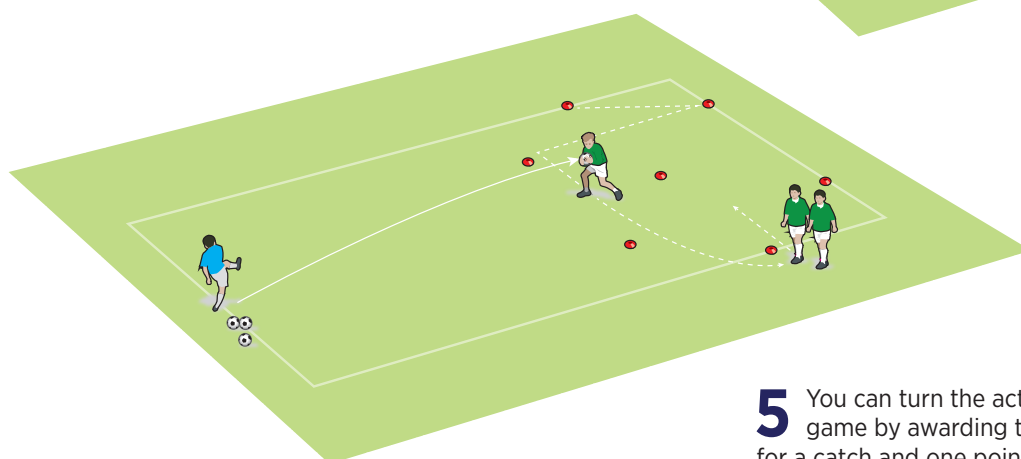


2 One keeper pushes off and moves sideways in a crouching position to pick up (or clear with feet) a volley from the server.

3 The server can hold the ball and kick that way for accuracy. The serve must be gentle at first, working up to a hard kick.



4 The keepers go in turn. Next the keeper starts on the back cone, goes forwards to the front cone and then sideways to catch or clear a shot (above). Then they start at the side cone, move to the back and then to the front before catching or clearing (left). Then the keepers go to the other side and do the same sequence.



5 You can turn the activity into a game by awarding three points for a catch and one point for a clearance.

How many players do I need?

We used four players – a server and three goalkeepers.

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

U13-U14 | GOALKEEPING 14

Goalkeeper kicking

SKILLS: DRIVEN OR LOFTED

CALL OUT

“Head over ball” • “Arms out for balance” • “Kick with laces on big toe side” • “Lean back for lofted kick”

1 Position two players about 15 yards apart. One player kicks the ball to the other player and he kicks back.

2 The ball is usually kicked either using the inner side of the foot that runs along from toe to heel, or using the small area around the inside of the big toe.

Driven kick

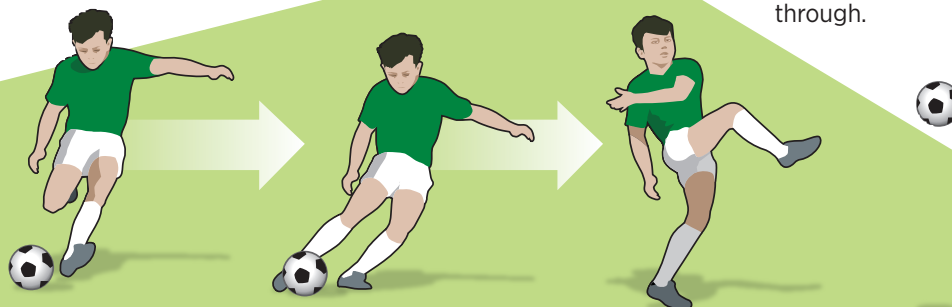


To make the ball go low and fast the body must lean forward with the player's head over the ball and facing down

3 With each technique the body will be positioned in a different way, in order to propel the ball at different speeds, strengths and heights.

4 The body will always be balanced, with the player's eyes on the ball and with the non-kicking foot and both arms providing balance and support while the kicking leg pulls back and follows through.

Lofted kick



To make the ball go high and slow, the body must lean back with the player's eyes behind the ball and his head level with the horizon

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs

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

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U13-U14
HEADING

U13-U14 | HEADING 1

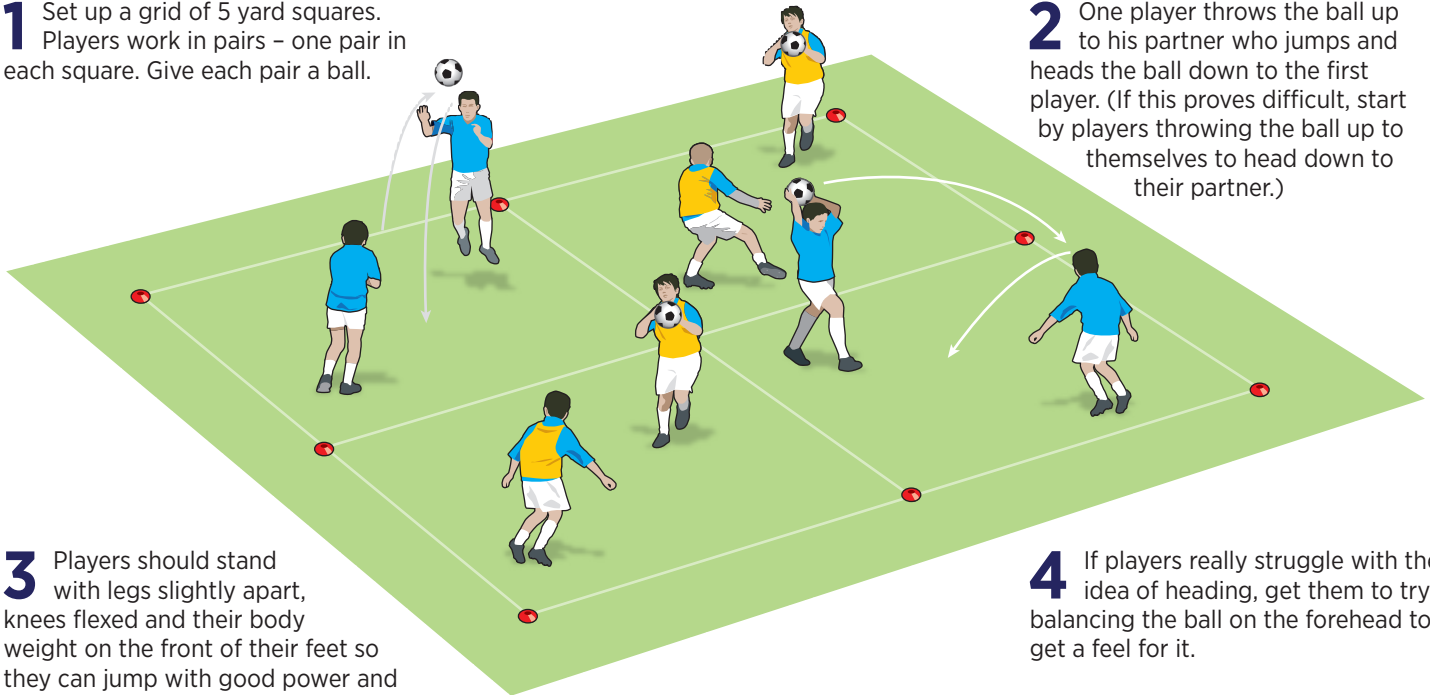
Correct heading technique in attack

ACTIVITY: ATTACKING HEADERS

CALL OUT

“Eyes open look at the ball” • “Put your weight on the balls of your feet” •
“Head the ball down”

1 Set up a grid of 5 yard squares. Players work in pairs – one pair in each square. Give each pair a ball.



2 One player throws the ball up to his partner who jumps and heads the ball down to the first player. (If this proves difficult, start by players throwing the ball up to themselves to head down to their partner.)

3 Players should stand with legs slightly apart, knees flexed and their body weight on the front of their feet so they can jump with good power and balance. They must aim to head the ball above the middle so that it goes downwards.

4 If players really struggle with the idea of heading, get them to try balancing the ball on the forehead to get a feel for it.

Making an attacking header

Use arms to gain height in the jump and remain balanced

Use middle part of the forehead

Keep eyes open and on the ball

Head the ball down

Keep knees flexed to spring into the jump



Note: When starting with heading technique I tend to deflate the balls so they are not so hard when players practise heading in training. As the players get older they can practise with fully pumped up balls.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

Key

Player movement

Ball movement

Run with the ball

Shot

U13-U14 | HEADING 2

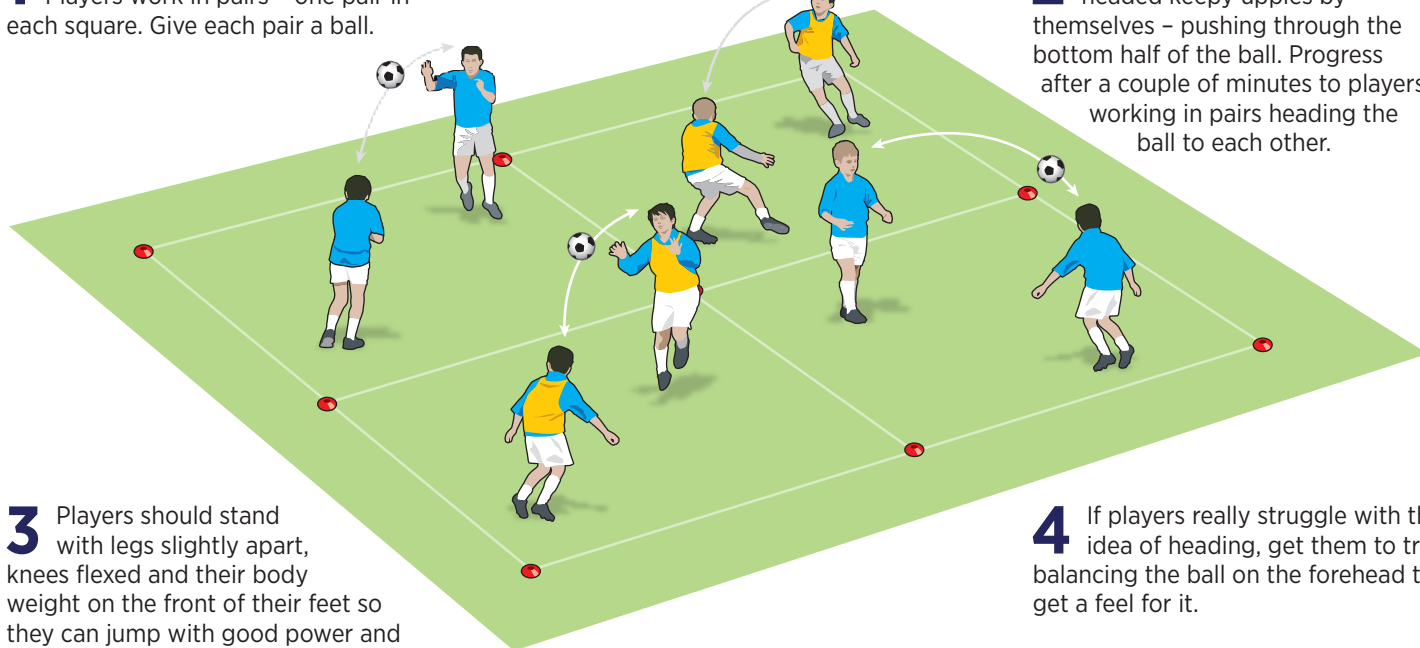
Correct heading technique in defence

ACTIVITY: DEFENSIVE HEADERS

CALL OUT

“Eyes open look at the ball” • “Put your weight on the balls of your feet” •
“Push upwards through the bottom of the ball”

1 Set up a grid of 5 yard squares. Players work in pairs – one pair in each square. Give each pair a ball.

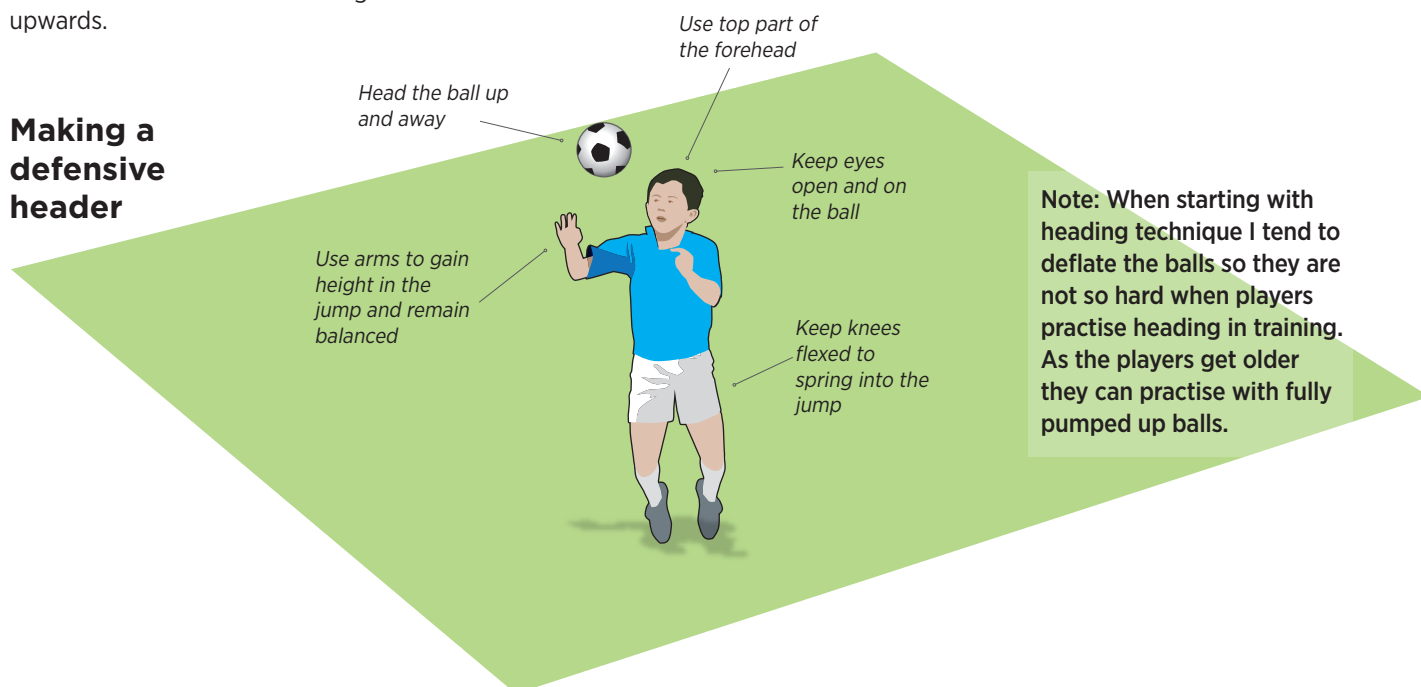


2 Start with players doing simple headed keepy uppies by themselves – pushing through the bottom half of the ball. Progress after a couple of minutes to players working in pairs heading the ball to each other.

3 Players should stand with legs slightly apart, knees flexed and their body weight on the front of their feet so they can jump with good power and balance. They must aim to head the ball below the middle so that it goes upwards.

4 If players really struggle with the idea of heading, get them to try balancing the ball on the forehead to get a feel for it.

Making a defensive header



Note: When starting with heading technique I tend to deflate the balls so they are not so hard when players practise heading in training. As the players get older they can practise with fully pumped up balls.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

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

U13-U14 | HEADING 3

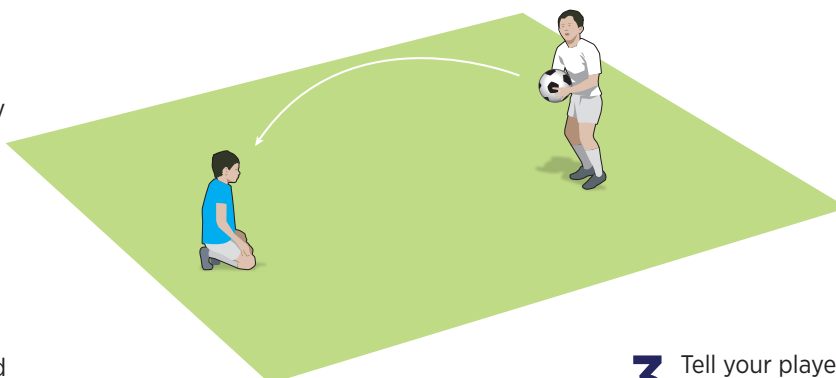
Fun heading race

GAME: HEAD TO HEAD

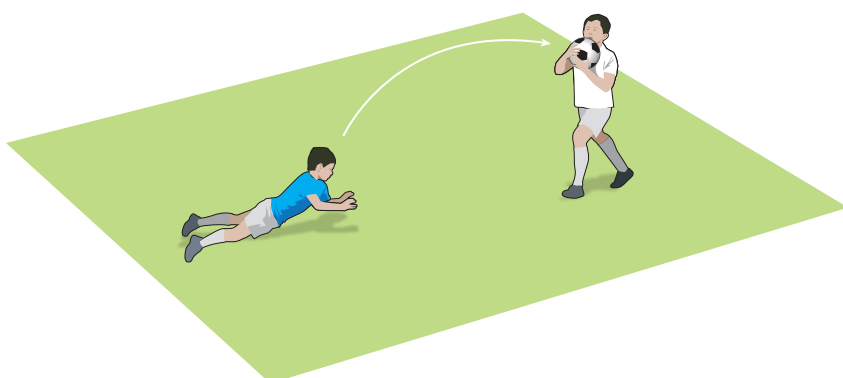
CALL OUT

“Throw the ball slightly in front of the player” • “Spring forward and head the ball back” • “Keep your eyes on the ball and mouth shut”

1 Get your players into pairs with one player as the server and the other the header. The header must start by kneeling up with his arms by his sides.



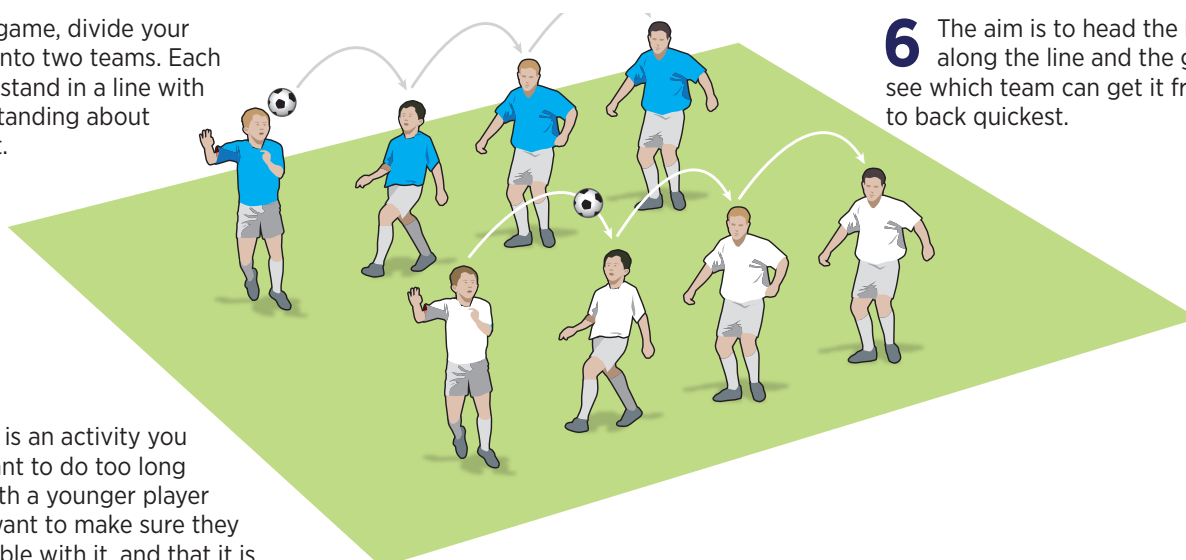
2 The server throws the ball and the player dives forward to head the ball, follow through and end up on his arms.



3 Tell your players to try to contact the ball and not let it contact them, and hit it on the hard part of their head using their whole body to follow through.

4 Make sure the players are taking turns to head and catch – try five headers then swap thrower and header.

5 For the game, divide your players into two teams. Each team should stand in a line with the players standing about 2 yards apart.



6 The aim is to head the ball back along the line and the game is to see which team can get it from front to back quickest.

7 Heading is an activity you don't want to do too long especially with a younger player but you do want to make sure they are comfortable with it, and that it is something they are not afraid of because it is a very important part of the game.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs to start with. We used eight players in a 4v4 for the heading race.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

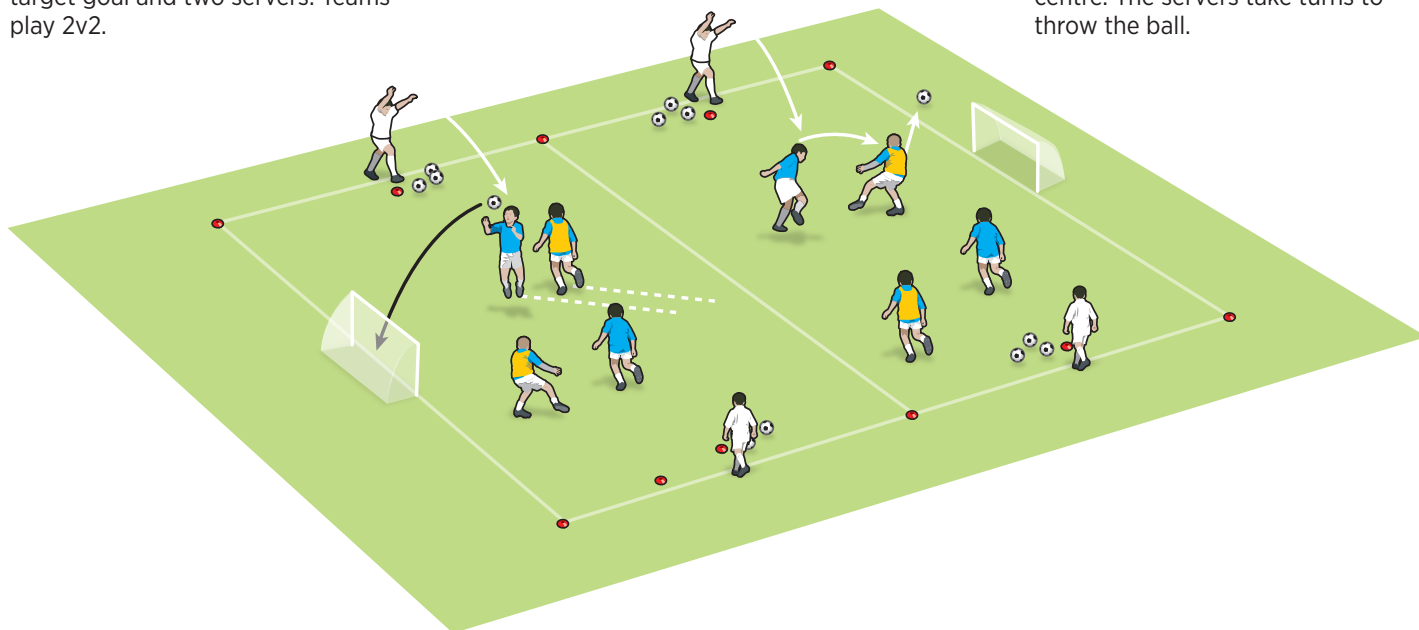
U13-U14 | HEADING 4

Win the first header

ACTIVITY: FIRST TO THE BALL

CALL OUT "Jump into the ball" • "Keep your eyes on the ball" • "Turn your head to direct the ball"

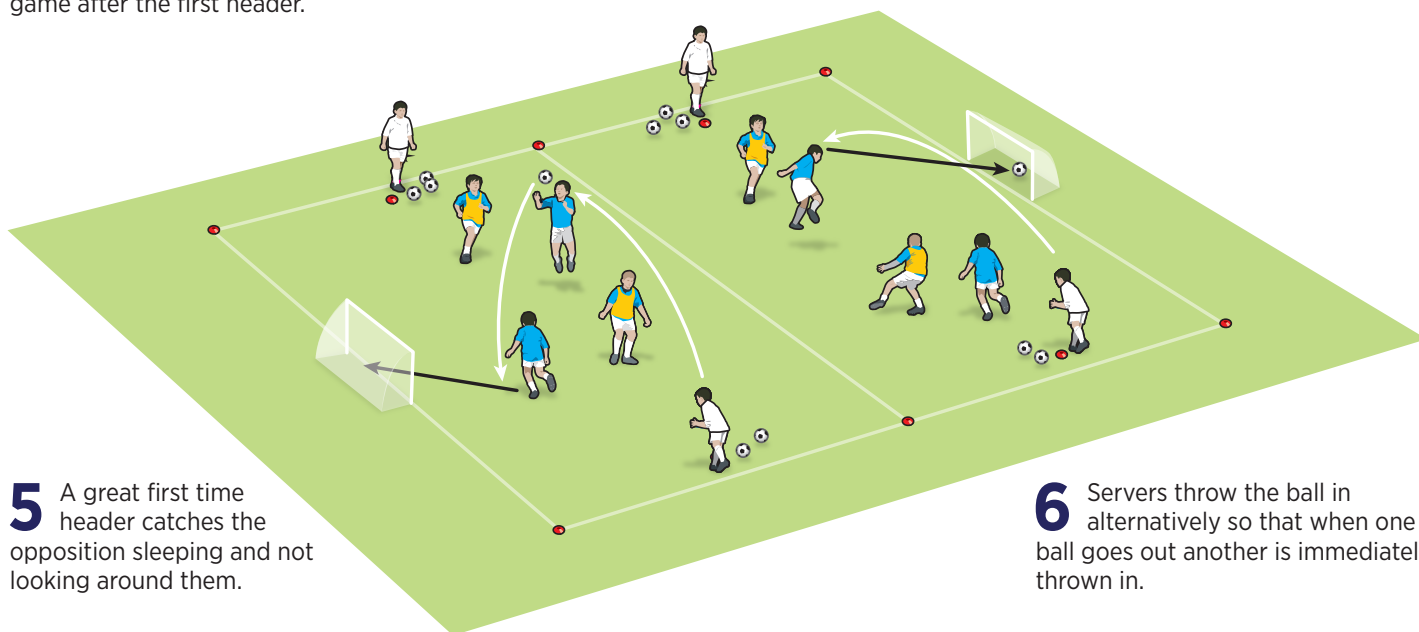
1 Set up a 20 x 20 yards area split into two zones. Each zone has a target goal and two servers. Teams play 2v2.



2 Play is started by one of the servers throwing into the centre. The servers take turns to throw the ball.

3 Players need to be first to the ball to direct the header either at goal or to a team mate. Play a normal game after the first header.

4 The session is a fast one and players soon tire and leave gaps, so swap pairs around every minute.



5 A great first time header catches the opposition sleeping and not looking around them.

6 Servers throw the ball in alternatively so that when one ball goes out another is immediately thrown in.

How many players do I need?

We used 12 players in the session

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

Practise on your own

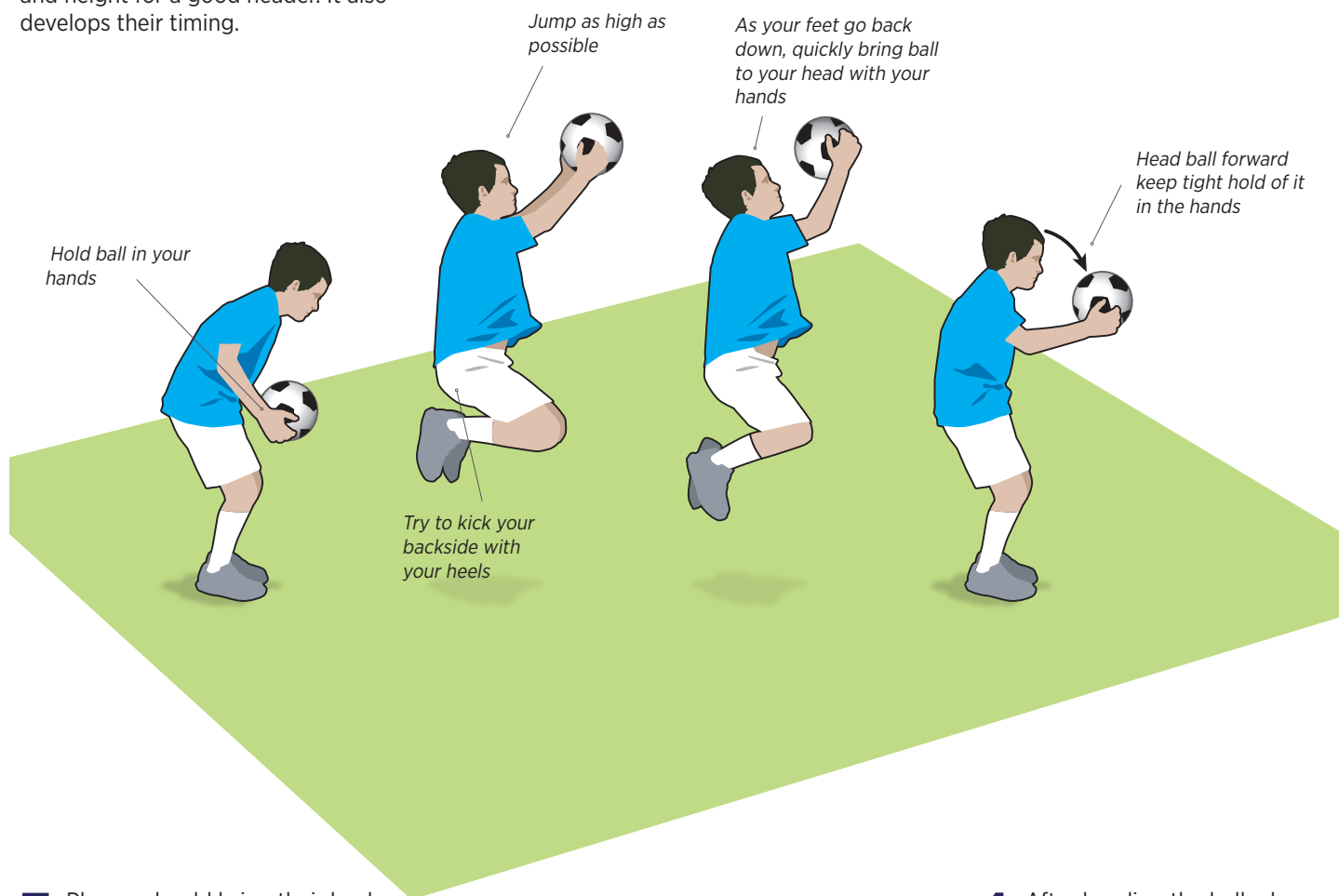
ACTIVITY: SKILL SESSION

CALL OUT

“Jump as high as you can” • “Kick your backside with your heels” • “Head forward but keep tight hold of the ball”

1 Your players must head the ball while holding it in their hands. It helps to develop the all important hanging effect so they have time and height for a good header. It also develops their timing.

2 Line your players up, tell them to hold the ball in front of them and get them to shout “JUMP”.



3 Players should bring their heels up to their backside and bring the ball upwards towards their foreheads in their hands and attempt to head it at the same time.

4 After heading the ball, players should turn their shoulders and hips so that they are back in line with the ball and then race away.

How many players do I need?

Players work their own

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

U13-U14 | HEADING 6

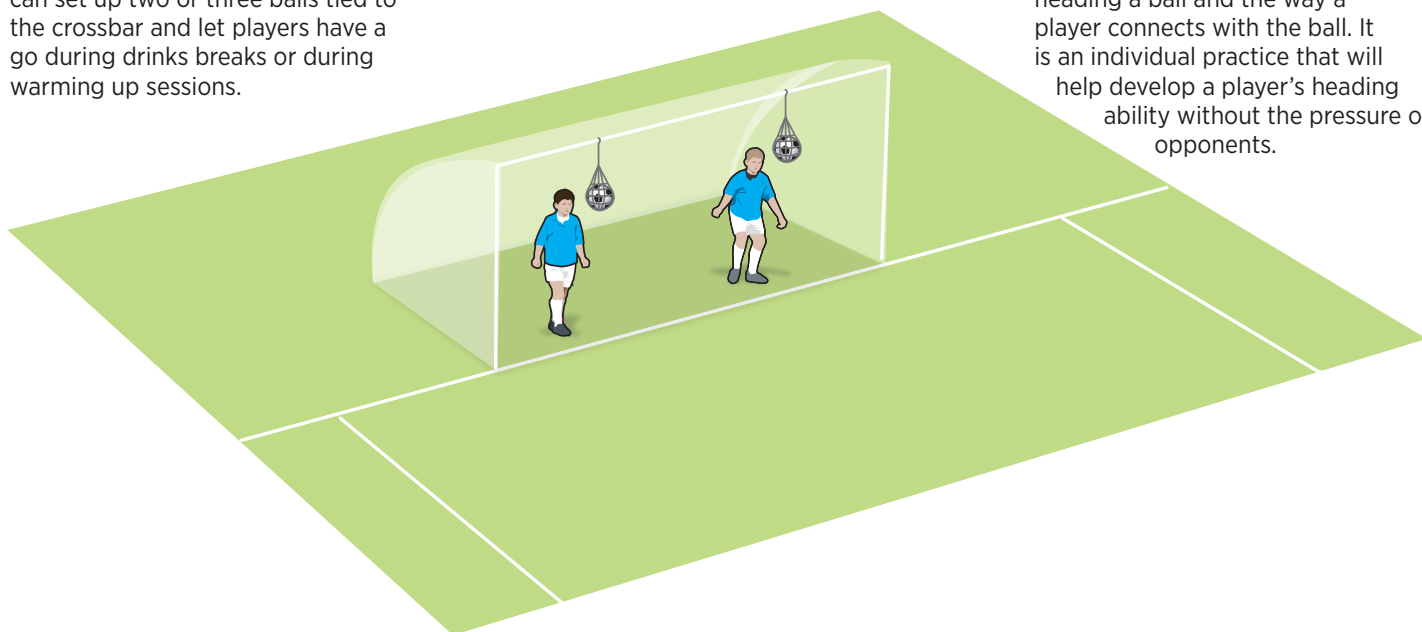
Simple heading

GAME: HEAD WITH POWER AND ACCURACY

CALL OUT

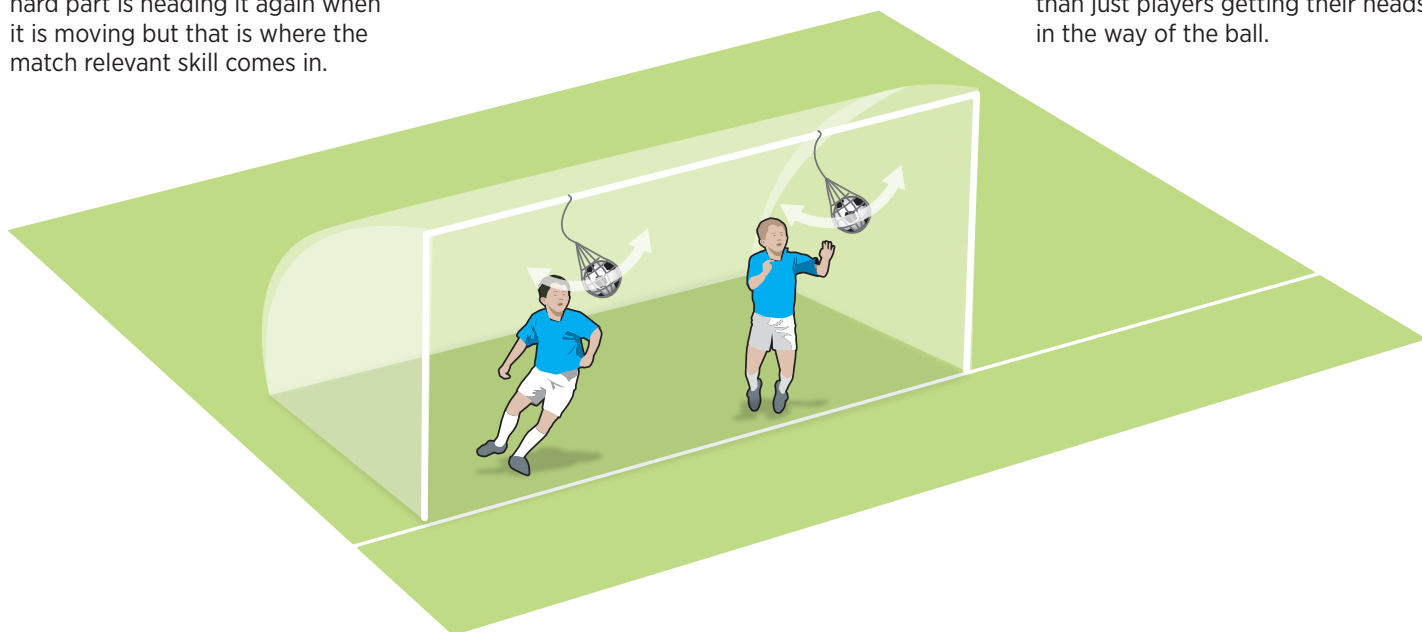
“Jump as high as you can” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Head just below the centre”

1 You need a goal with a crossbar, rope, string bags and balls. You can set up two or three balls tied to the crossbar and let players have a go during drinks breaks or during warming up sessions.



2 This is all about learning the right technique to control heading a ball and the way a player connects with the ball. It is an individual practice that will help develop a player’s heading ability without the pressure of opponents.

3 Players should keep their eyes on the ball at all times and head the ball just below the centre. The hard part is heading it again when it is moving but that is where the match relevant skill comes in.



4 This is a great fun and an easy way to get used to heading a ball for pace and accuracy rather than just players getting their heads in the way of the ball.

How many players do I need?

Players work their own

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

U13-U14 | HEADING 7

Have fun with headers

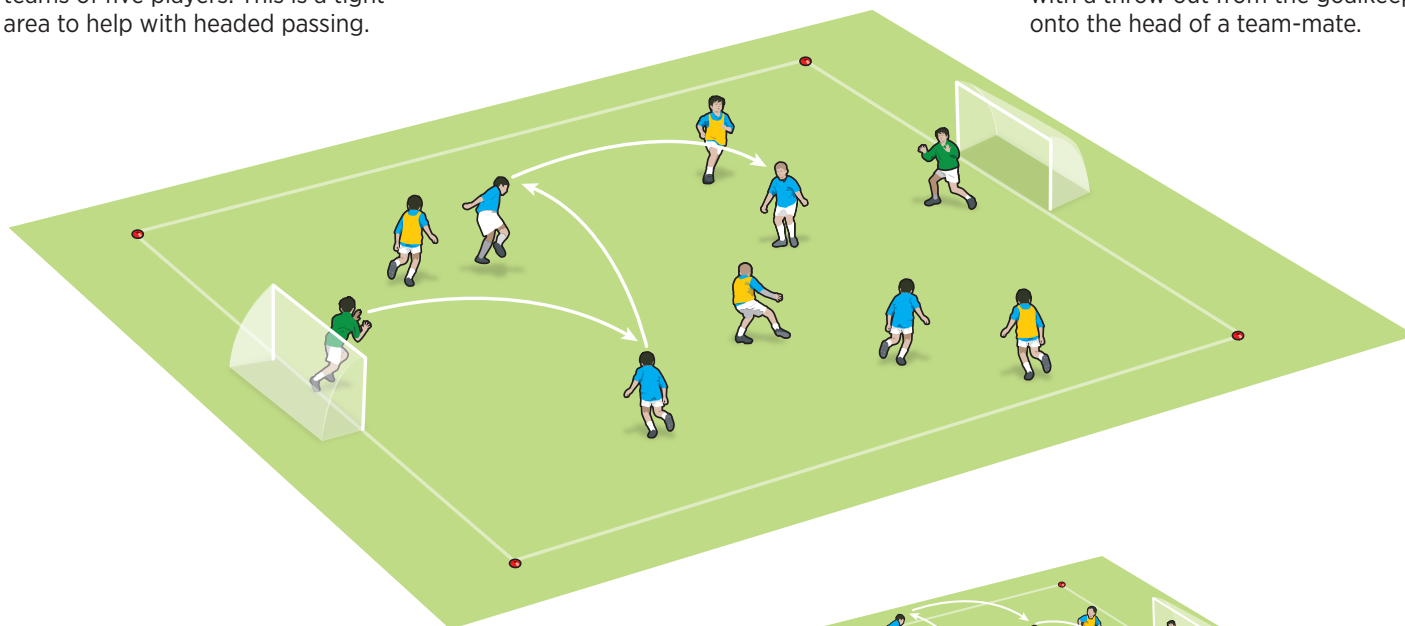
ACTIVITY: KING OF THE SKIES

CALL OUT

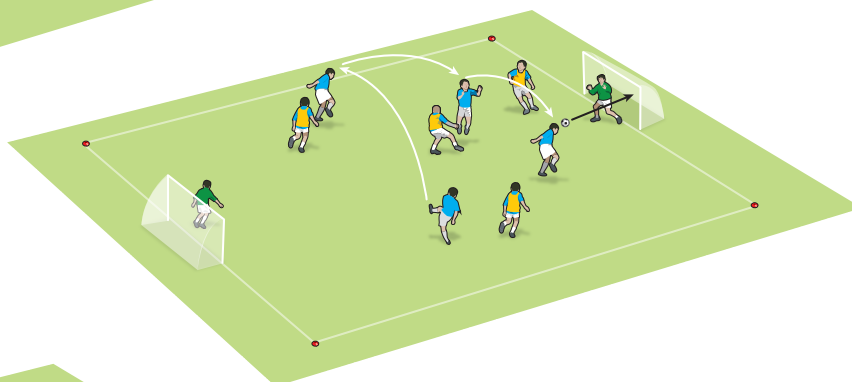
“Jump as high as you can” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Head just below the centre”

1 Set out a 12 x 10 yards area with a goal at each end. You need two teams of five players. This is a tight area to help with headed passing.

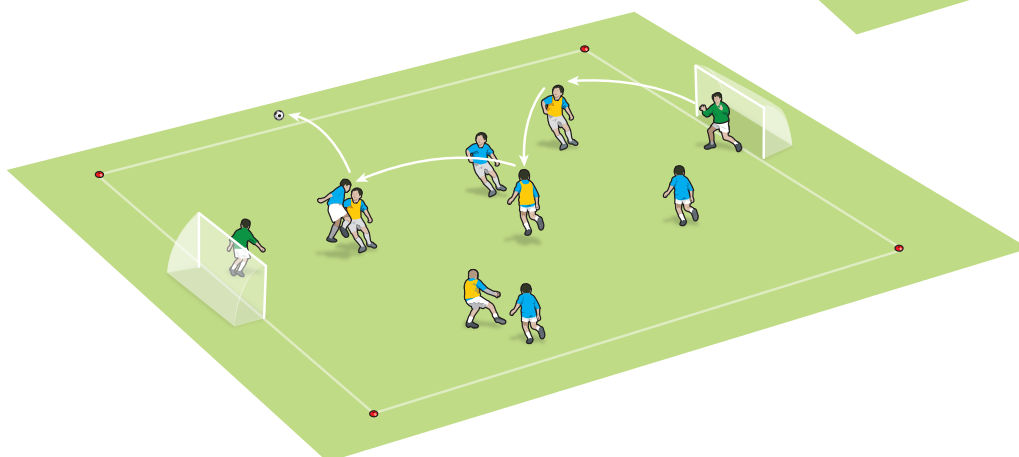
2 Scoring goals can only be done with a header. The game starts with a throw out from the goalkeeper onto the head of a team-mate.



3 Players must try to head the ball on without it hitting the ground. If the ball does hit the ground it should be flicked up onto the head of a team-mate.



4 The defending team should try and intercept the ball by heading it away.



How many players do I need?

We've used 10 players in the session

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

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U14

BALL CONTROL

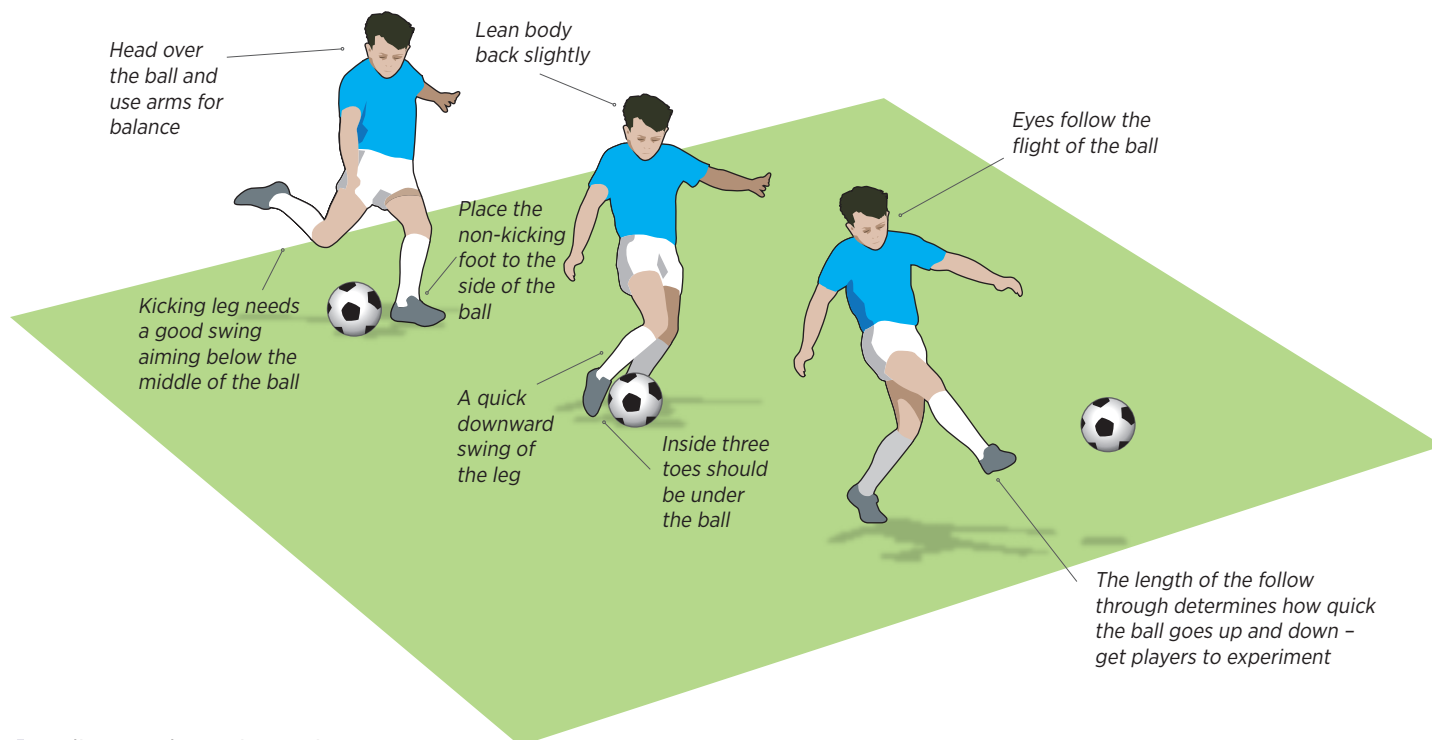
Pass 10 yards to a team mate

ACTIVITY: MAKE A LOFTED PASS OVER CONES

CALL OUT

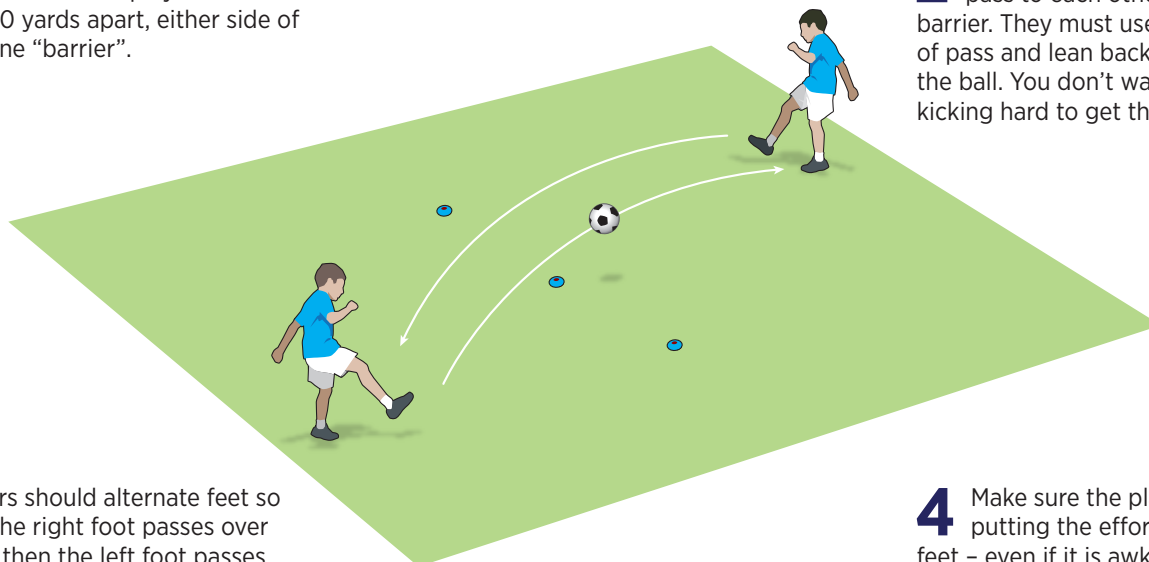
“Look to where the pass is going” • “Use the inside of the foot near the toe to lift the ball over the cones” • “Be accurate with both feet”

Making a lofted pass



1 Split your players into pairs. Set up so that the players are standing 10 yards apart, either side of a three cone “barrier”.

2 The aim is for the players to pass to each other over the cone barrier. They must use a good weight of pass and lean back slightly to lift the ball. You don’t want to see them kicking hard to get the lift.



3 Players should alternate feet so that the right foot passes over the cones then the left foot passes over the cones.

4 Make sure the players are putting the effort in with both feet – even if it is awkward for them at first.

How many players do I need?

Players work in pairs.

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

U14 | BALL CONTROL 1

Pass 10 yards to a team mate

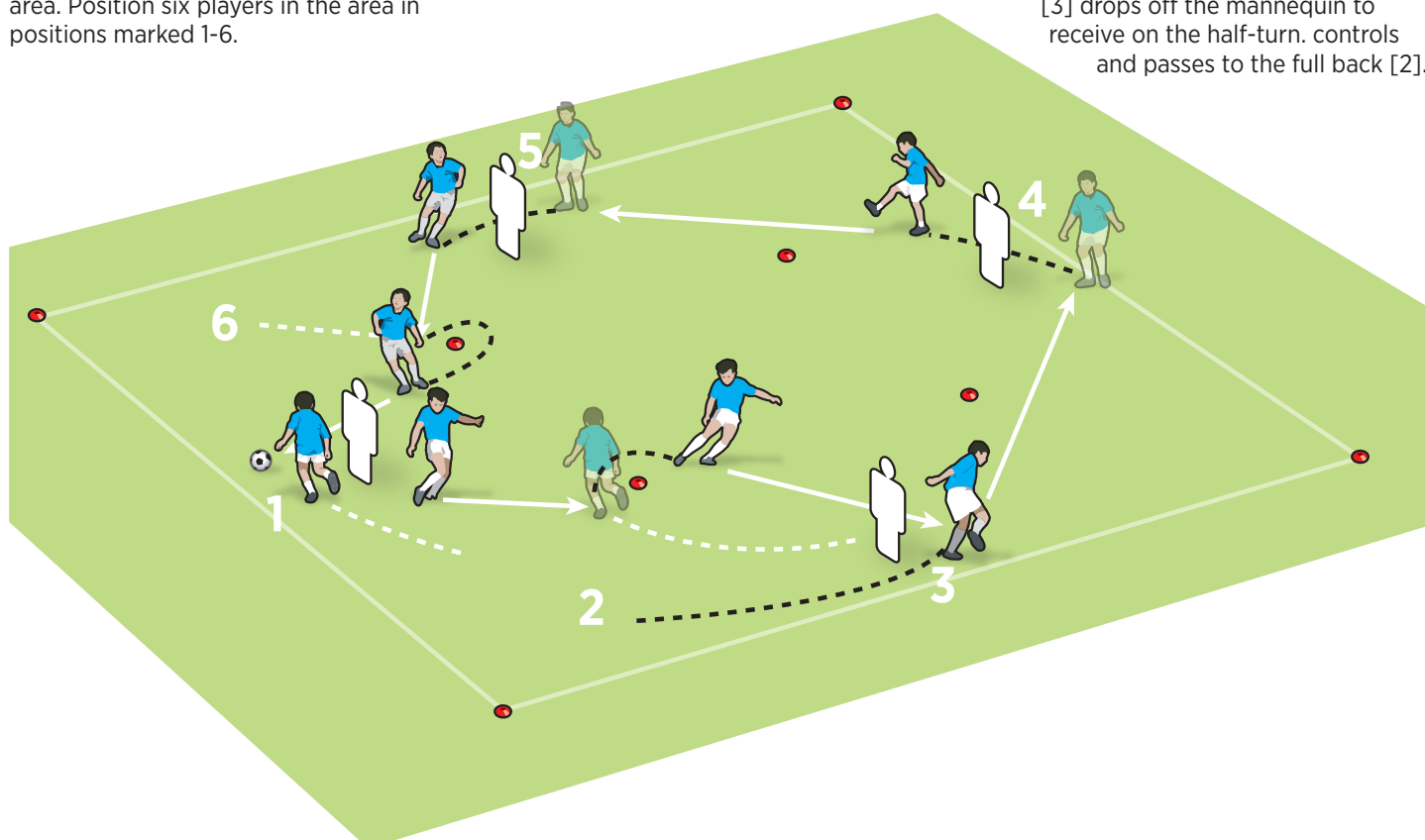
GAME: PASSING SEQUENCE

CALL OUT

“Look to where the pass is going” • “Use the inside or outside of your foot to pass” •
“Use both feet to pass”

1 Set out a 30 x 20 yards square and mannequins (or poles) in the centre of each side 2 yards from the side of the area. Position six players in the area in positions marked 1-6.

2 The right-hand sequence begins at the bottom of the practice at point 1 – The midfielder [3] drops off the mannequin to receive on the half-turn, controls and passes to the full back [2].



3 The full-back [2] moves from deep to run outside the mannequin at 3 and make a one touch pass into the forward [4].

4 The forward [4] receives a pass and moves around the back of the mannequin and passes to the winger [5].

5 The winger[5] receives two-touch and feeds to his team mate [6] who has moved centrally who then spins “around the corner” and feeds back to the target man [1].

6 Keep the sequence going until players get used to it then switch positions so every player plays each position – then add a second ball so one ball starts at 1 and another starts at the same time at 2.

GAME PLAY

Movement to receive the ball.
Receive with good first touch.
Good weight on the pass.

How many players do I need?

We used six players in this game.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→	→
	→	→

Receive, control and pass

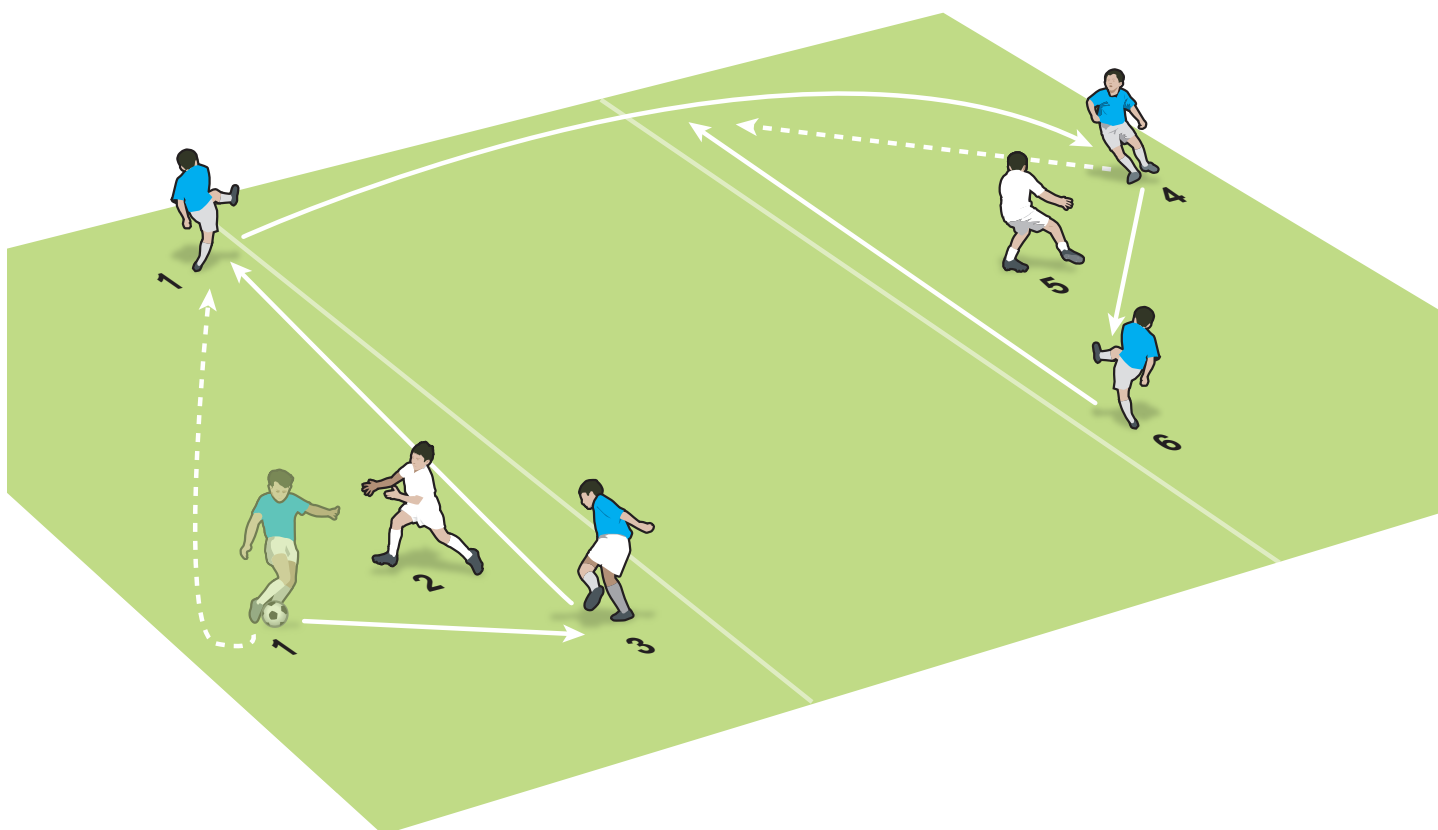
ACTIVITY: WALL PASS ROTATION

CALL OUT "Use the inside of your foot to control the ball" • "Call for the ball" • "keep your eyes on the ball"

1 This drill replicates a match situation where a winger is receiving the ball from distance. Set up three 10-yard channels. Player 1 - in the bottom channel - has the ball; player 2 is the passive defender and player 3 is the wall.

2 Player 1 dribbles the ball towards passive defender, player 2, and plays a one-two with player 3.

3 Player 1 takes the return pass and chips the ball down the line, across the middle channel to player 4 - the winger.



4 Player 4 volleys or heads the ball to his own "wall", player 6, and runs past passive defender, player 5, to repeat the move.

5 What you want to see is a player drawing the defender, passing and going at pace to get the return pass. And an accurate chipped pass played with the instep/big toe.

How many players do I need?

We used six players for this activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement

U14 | BALL CONTROL 2

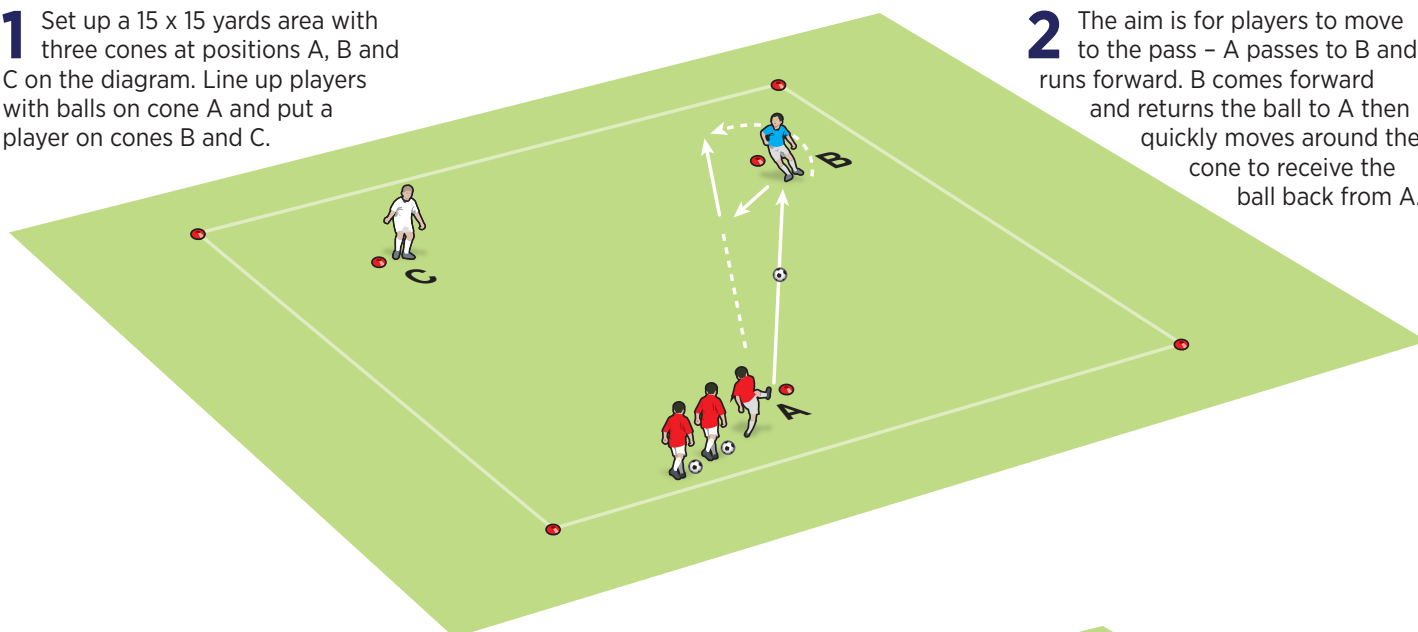
Receive, control and pass

GAME: PASSING COMBINATIONS

CALL OUT

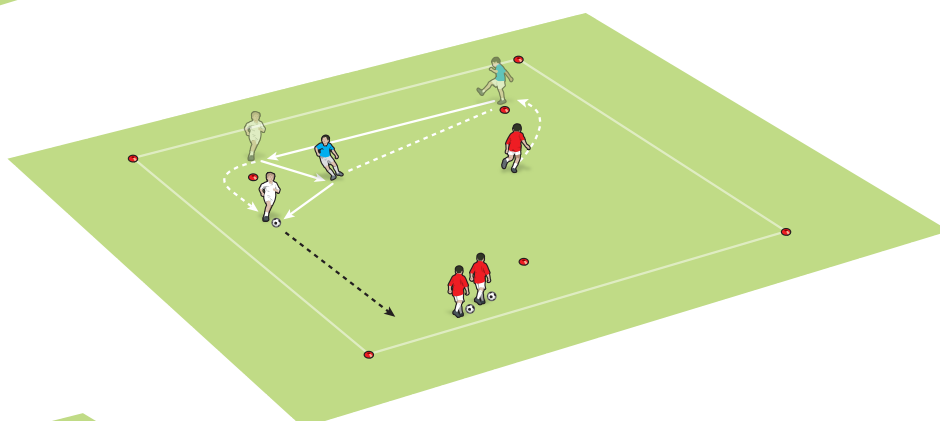
“Call for the ball” • “Keep your eyes on the ball” • “Use part of your body or the inside of the foot to control the ball”

1 Set up a 15 x 15 yards area with three cones at positions A, B and C on the diagram. Line up players with balls on cone A and put a player on cones B and C.

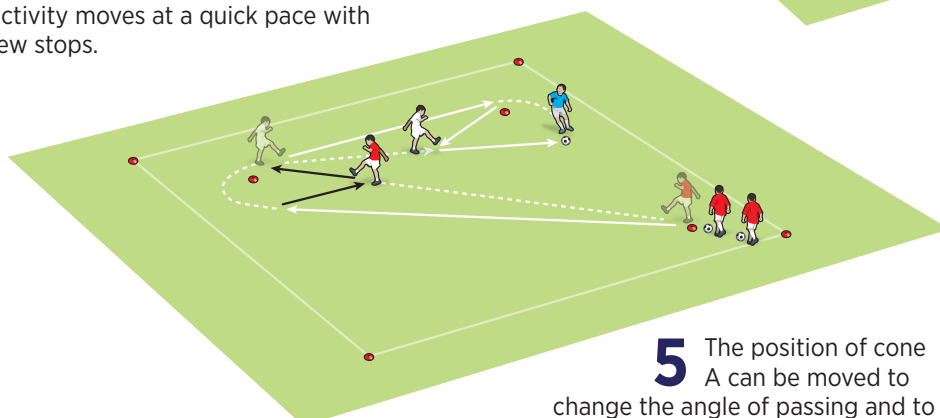


2 The aim is for players to move to the pass – A passes to B and runs forward. B comes forward and returns the ball to A then quickly moves around the cone to receive the ball back from A.

3 B now passes to C who returns it runs around the cone then gets a pass back. C dribbles the ball back to cone A.



4 Players move up one cone each time – A moves to B, B moves to C and C goes back to the beginning. This should be done quickly so the activity moves at a quick pace with few stops.



5 The position of cone A can be moved to change the angle of passing and to make it a longer or shorter pass.

GAME PLAY

Players concentrate on accuracy of the pass.

Movement key to success.

Understanding will help with movement.

How many players do I need?

We used five players in this activity.

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

Dribble with the ball and turn with it

ACTIVITY: SQUARE YOUR DRIBBLE

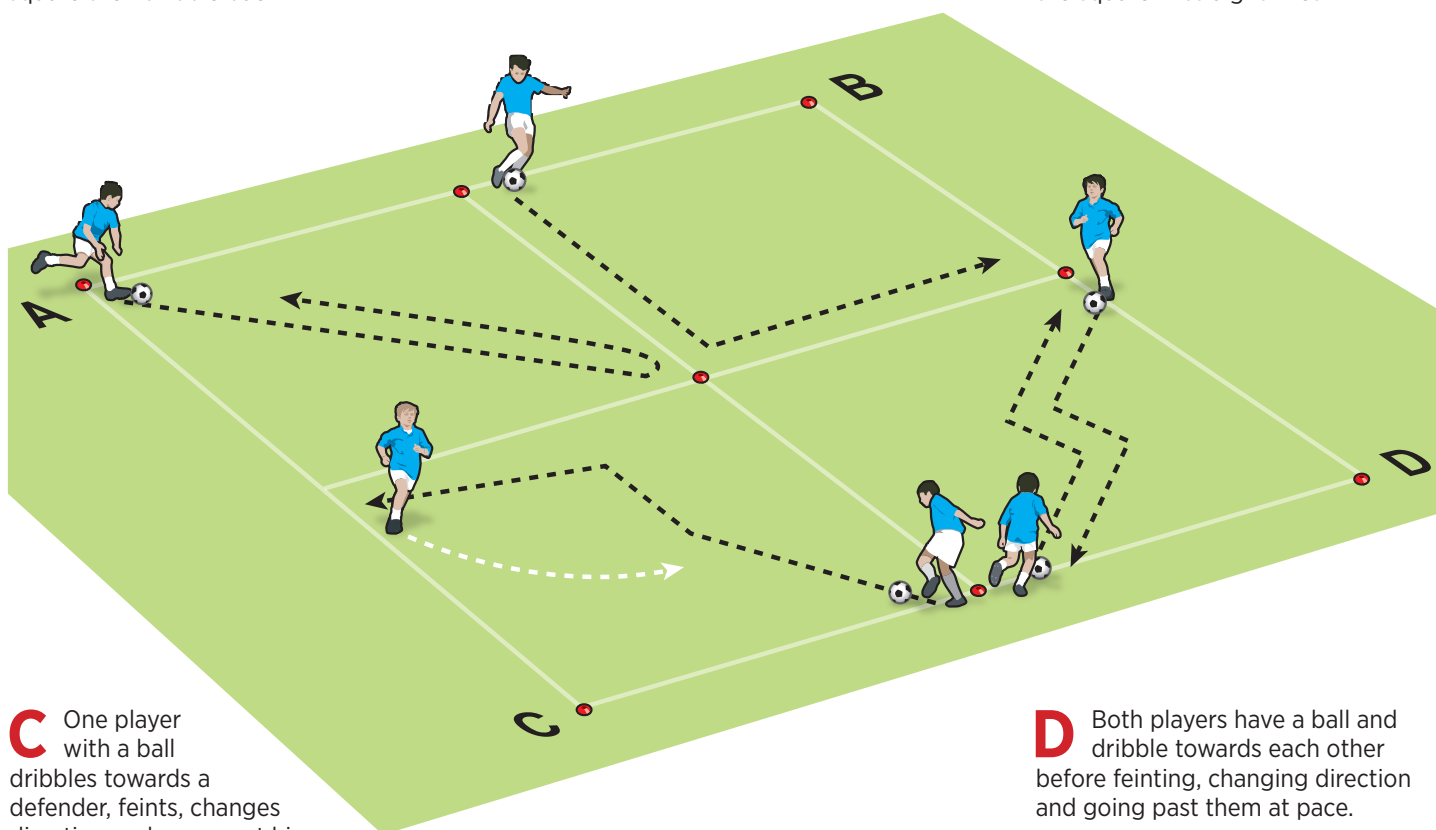
CALL OUT

“Keep glancing up so you can see where you are running” • “Watch your angles” • “Check where the ball is and cover passing lanes”

1 Set out four 10-yard squares. This is a simple dribbling with the ball session – players practise individually dribbling along different lines, and also in pairs going past a defender.

A In this square players dribble diagonally to the centre of the square then dribble back.

B Players in this square are dribbling along the borders of the square in straight lines.



C One player with a ball dribbles towards a defender, feints, changes direction and goes past him at pace.

D Both players have a ball and dribble towards each other before feinting, changing direction and going past them at pace.

2 Remind players they must keep the head over the ball when running with it to keep it close and maintain control.

3 When feinting to the left, throw shoulder to the left and transfer weight to the left foot before pushing away with the right foot and accelerating away with the ball. Vice versa for the right.

How many players do I need?

Six players took part in this activity, working individually and in pairs.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

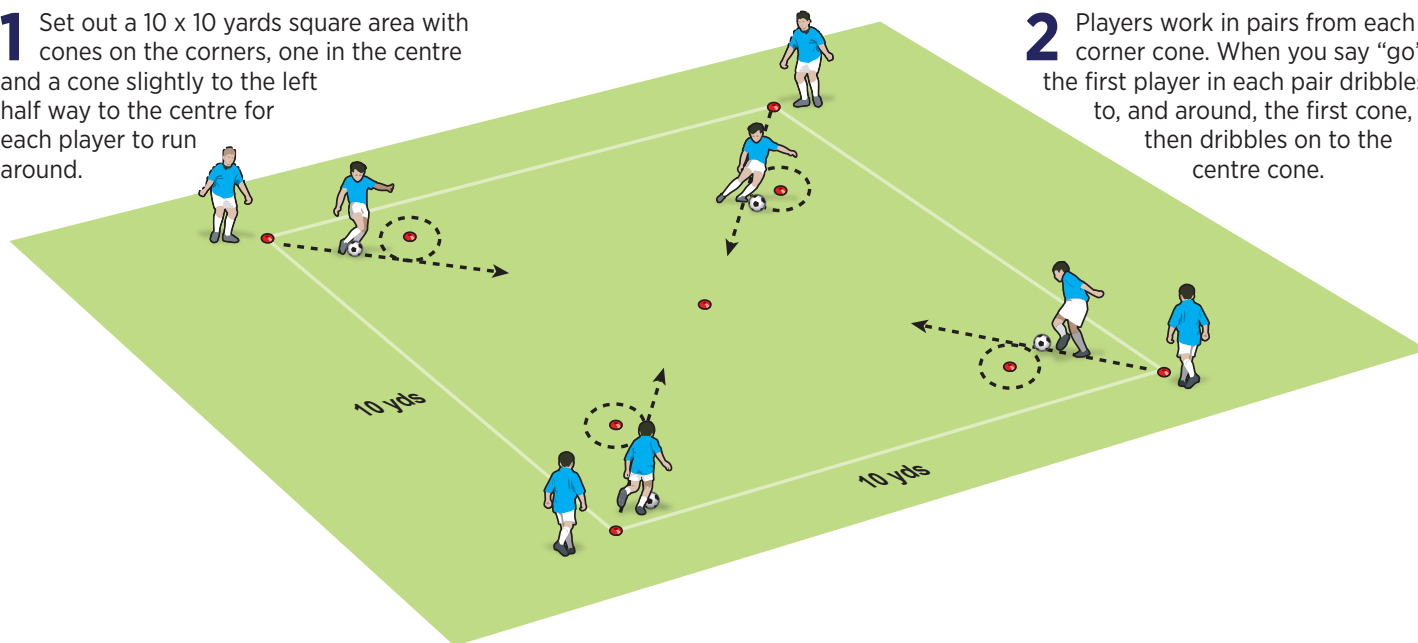
Dribble with the ball and turn with it

GAME: TURN AND TURN AGAIN

CALL OUT

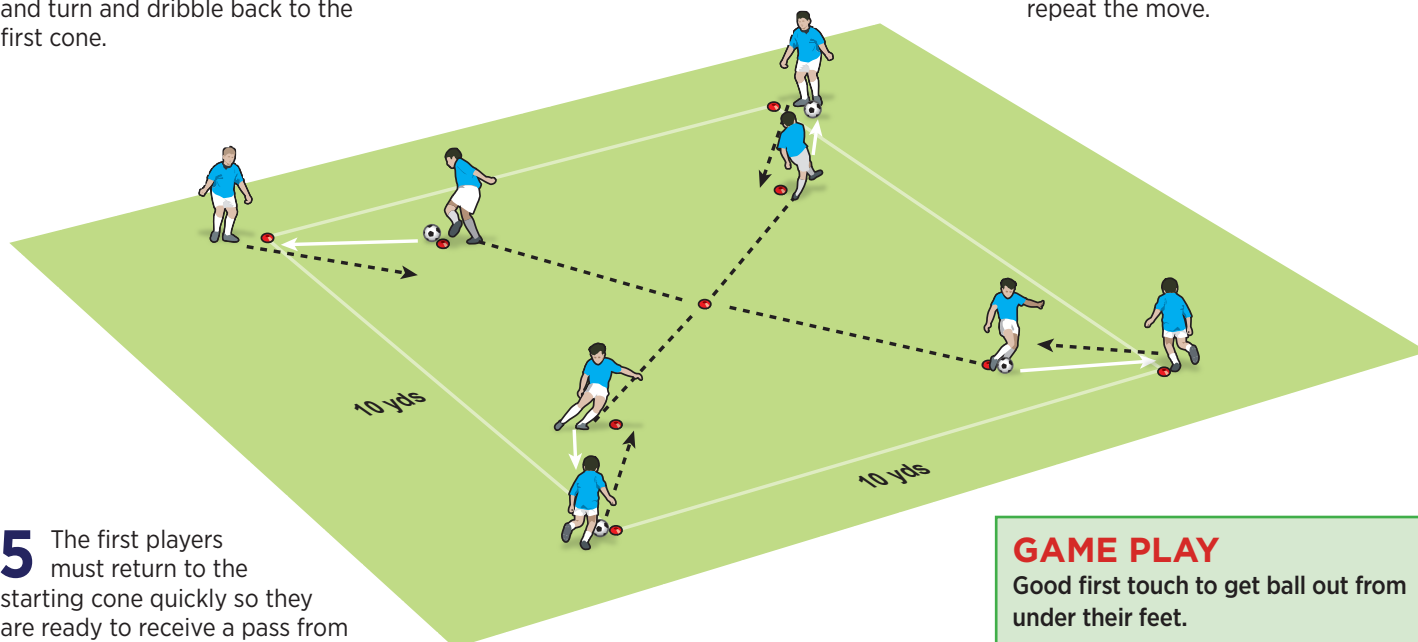
“Keep glancing up so you can see where you are running” • “Watch your angles” • “Check where the ball is and cover passing lanes”

1 Set out a 10 x 10 yards square area with cones on the corners, one in the centre and a cone slightly to the left half way to the centre for each player to run around.



2 Players work in pairs from each corner cone. When you say “go”, the first player in each pair dribbles to, and around, the first cone, then dribbles on to the centre cone.

3 When the players get to the centre cone they stop the ball and turn and dribble back to the first cone.



4 At the first cone, the players pass to their partners who repeat the move.

5 The first players must return to the starting cone quickly so they are ready to receive a pass from their partner and take another turn.

GAME PLAY

Good first touch to get ball out from under their feet.
Turn with good technique.
Good weight on the pass.

How many players do I need?

We used eight players in this session.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	→	→
	→	→

First touch control

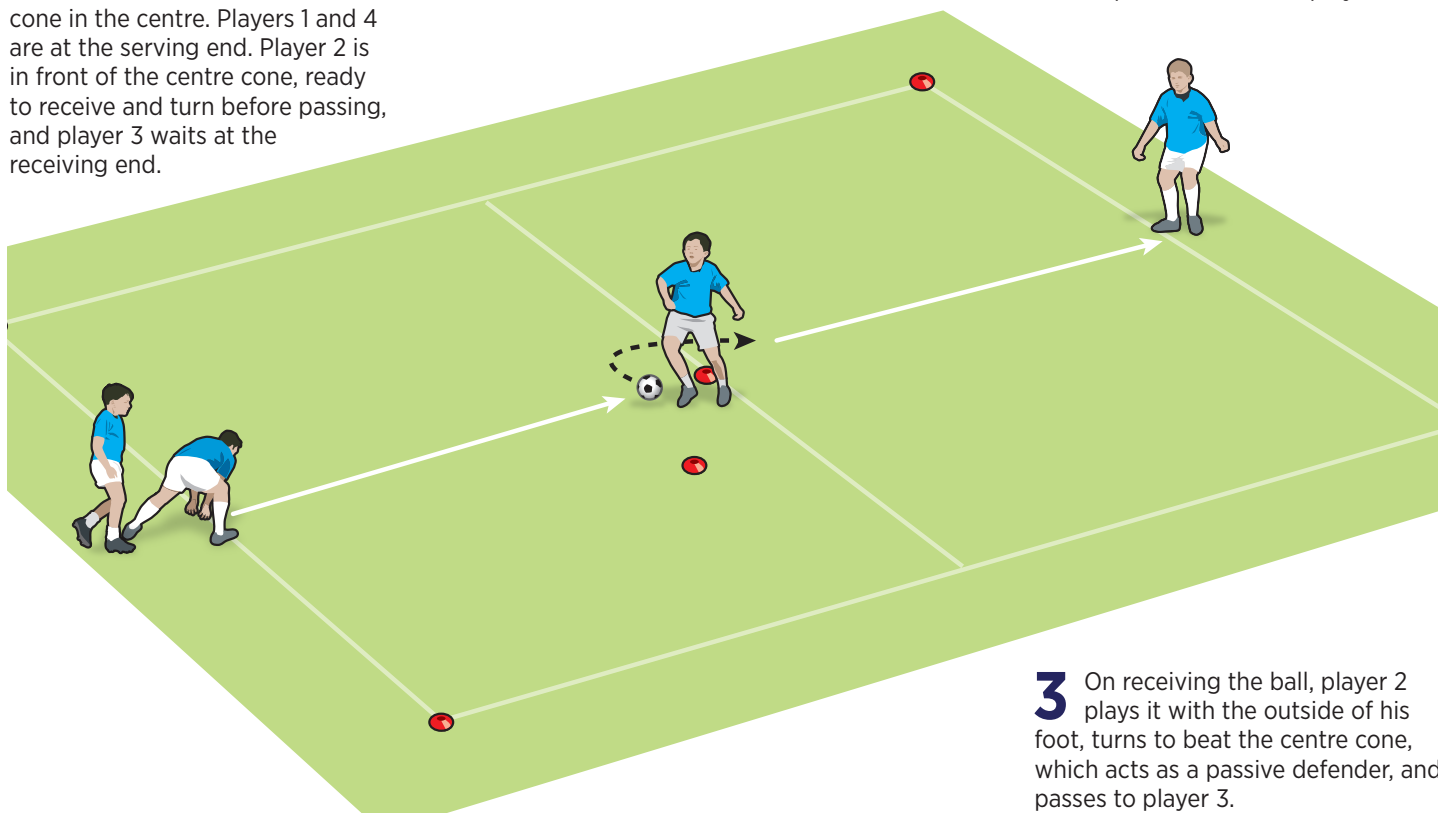
ACTIVITY: TURN WITH THE BALL AND PASS

CALL OUT

“Cushion the ball with a light touch” • “Turn and pass first time” • “Listen for the call”
• “Accuracy”

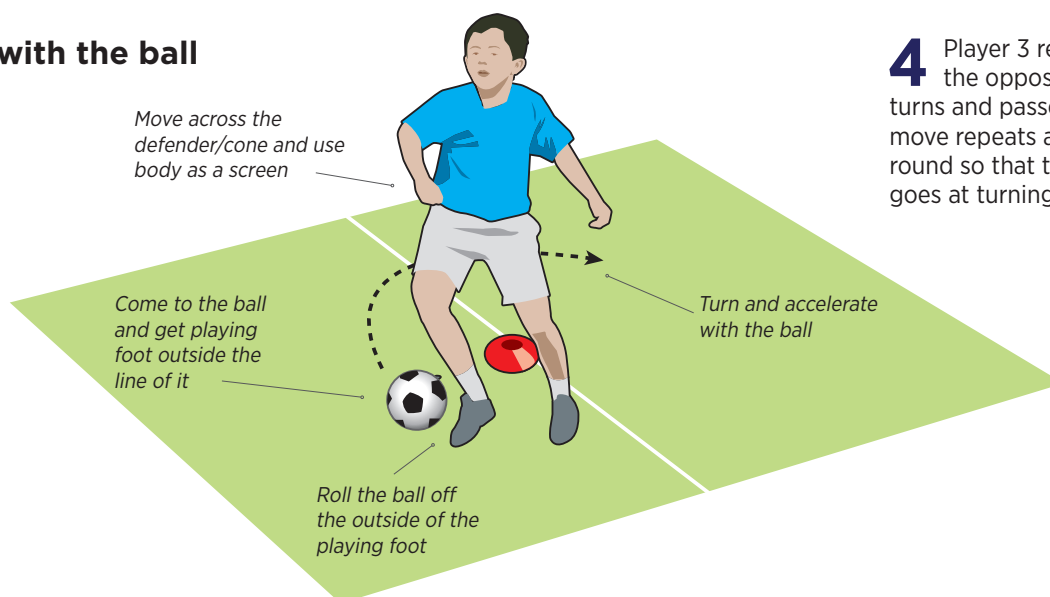
1 Set up a 20 x 10 yards area divided into two halves with a cone in the centre. Players 1 and 4 are at the serving end. Player 2 is in front of the centre cone, ready to receive and turn before passing, and player 3 waits at the receiving end.

2 When you say “go”, player 1 rolls or passes the ball to player 2.



3 On receiving the ball, player 2 plays it with the outside of his foot, turns to beat the centre cone, which acts as a passive defender, and passes to player 3.

Turning with the ball



4 Player 3 repeats the move in the opposite direction. Player 2 turns and passes to player 4 and the move repeats again. Swap the players round so that they all have several goes at turning with the ball.

How many players do I need?

We used four players in the session.

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

U14 | BALL CONTROL 4

First touch control

GAME: CONTROL AND CATCH

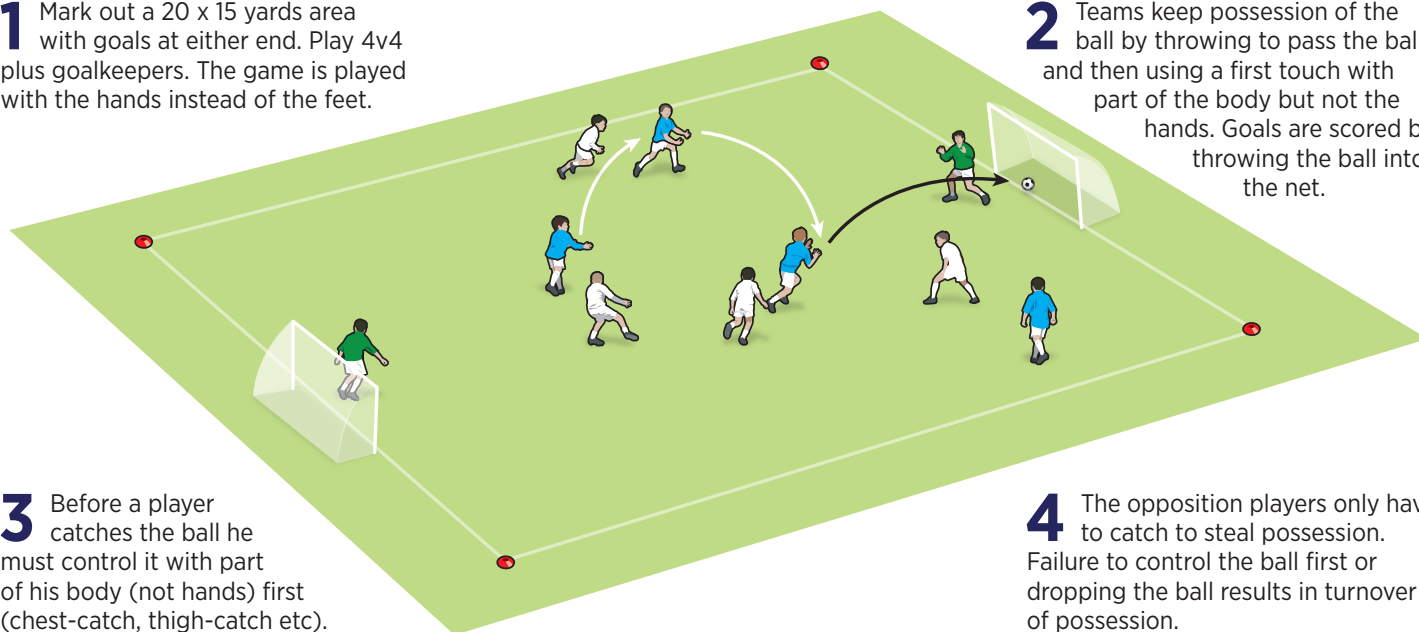
CALL OUT "Keep your eyes on the ball" • "Look up to see where to stop the ball" • "Make a good first touch"

1 Mark out a 20 x 15 yards area with goals at either end. Play 4v4 plus goalkeepers. The game is played with the hands instead of the feet.

2 Teams keep possession of the ball by throwing to pass the ball and then using a first touch with part of the body but not the hands. Goals are scored by throwing the ball into the net.

3 Before a player catches the ball he must control it with part of his body (not hands) first (chest-catch, thigh-catch etc).

4 The opposition players only have to catch to steal possession. Failure to control the ball first or dropping the ball results in turnover of possession.



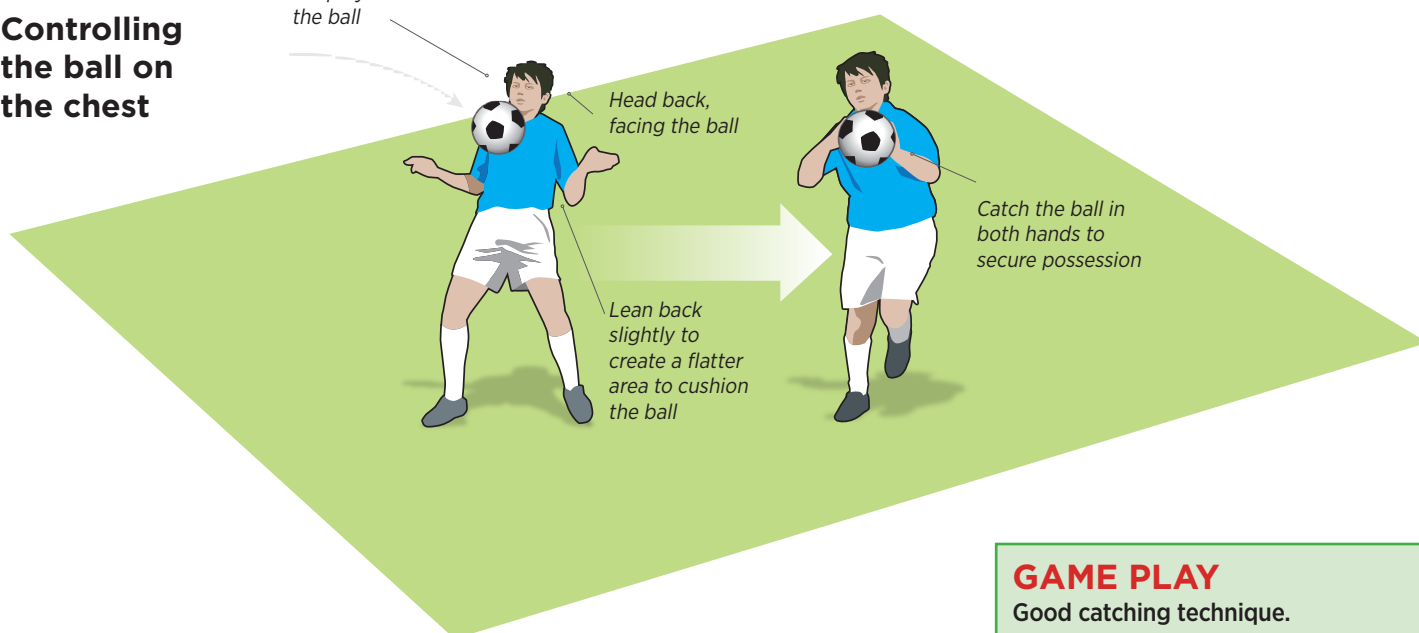
Controlling the ball on the chest

Keep eyes on the ball

Head back, facing the ball

Lean back slightly to create a flatter area to cushion the ball

Catch the ball in both hands to secure possession



GAME PLAY
Good catching technique.
Accurate passing and shooting.
Look for match-like pressing.

How many players do I need?

We used 10 players in this game.

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

Shielding the ball

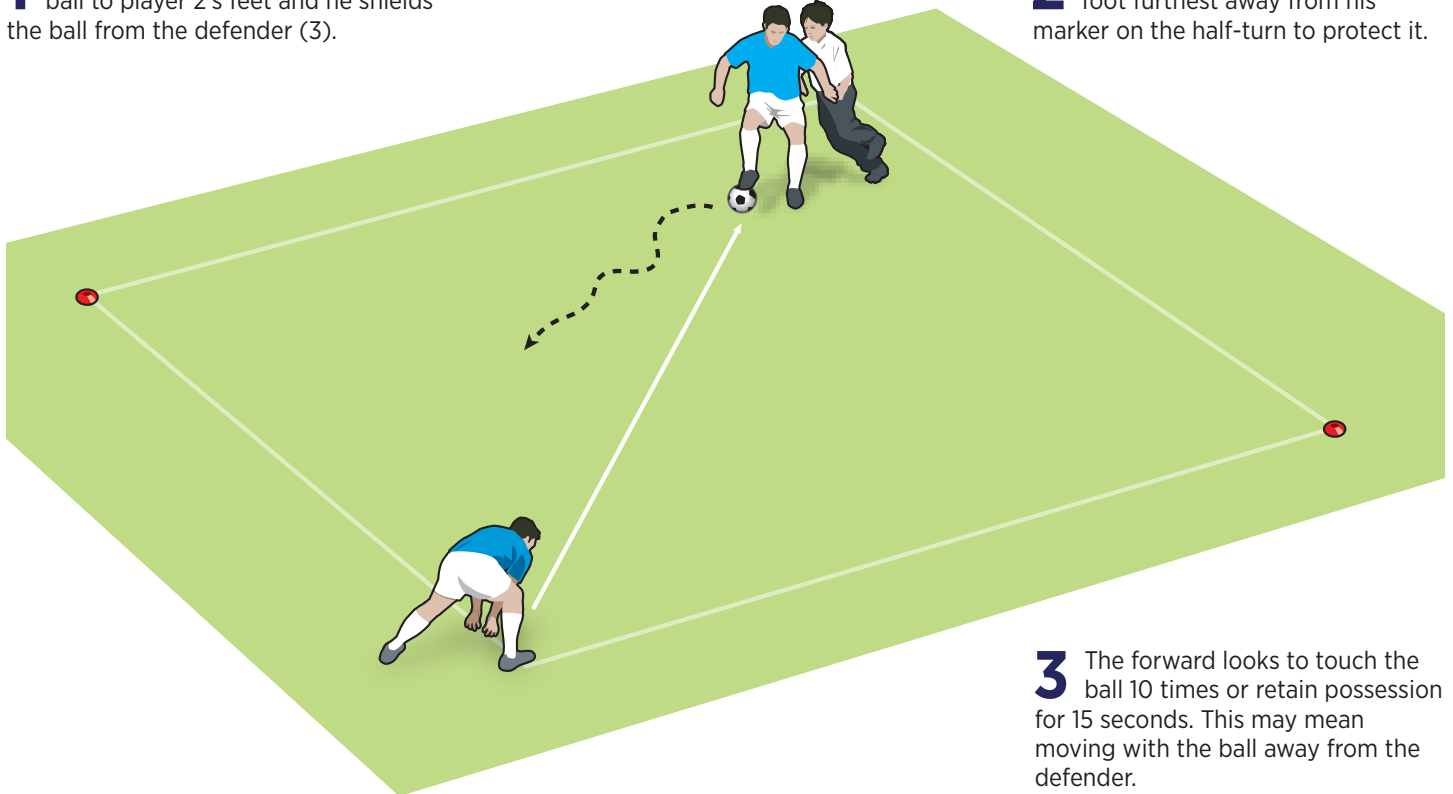
ACTIVITY: KEEP IT CLOSE

CALL OUT

“Keep your body between ball and opponent” • “Use touch to keep opponent at arms length” • “Keep the ball close to your body”

1 In a 10-yard square, player 1 rolls the ball to player 2’s feet and he shields the ball from the defender (3).

2 Player 2 keeps the ball on the foot furthest away from his marker on the half-turn to protect it.

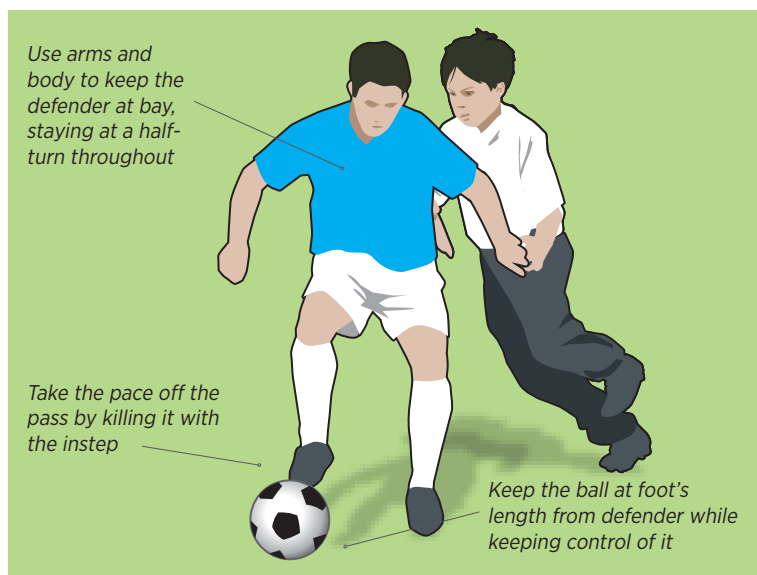


3 The forward looks to touch the ball 10 times or retain possession for 15 seconds. This may mean moving with the ball away from the defender.

4 Initially, restrict the defender so the forward has the first touch unchallenged.

5 The exercise can be made more difficult for player 2 if player 1 throws the ball at his thigh or chest to control.

Shielding the ball



How many players do I need?

You can run this activity with three players, or two players if you are the server.

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

U14 | BALL CONTROL 5

Shielding the ball

GAME: WIN THE 1V1S

CALL OUT

“Keep your body between ball and opponent” • “Use touch to keep opponent at arms length” • “Keep the ball close to your body”

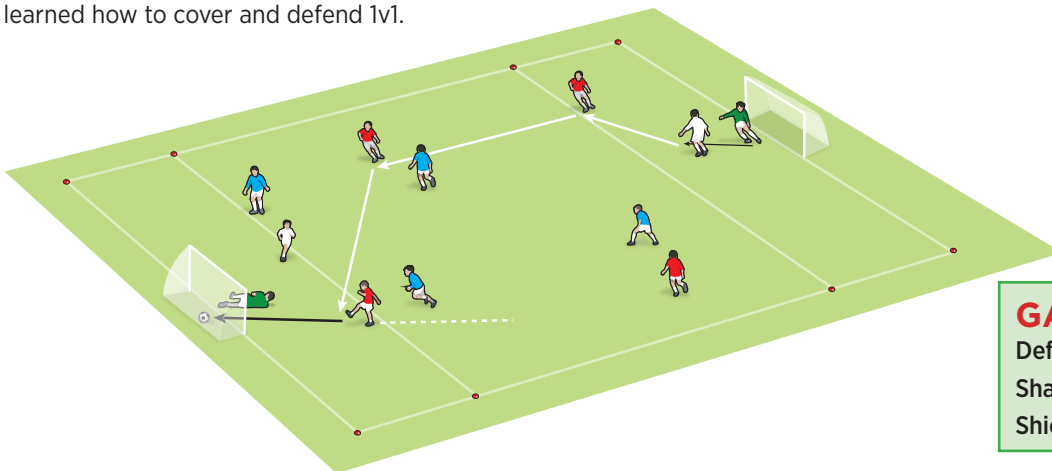
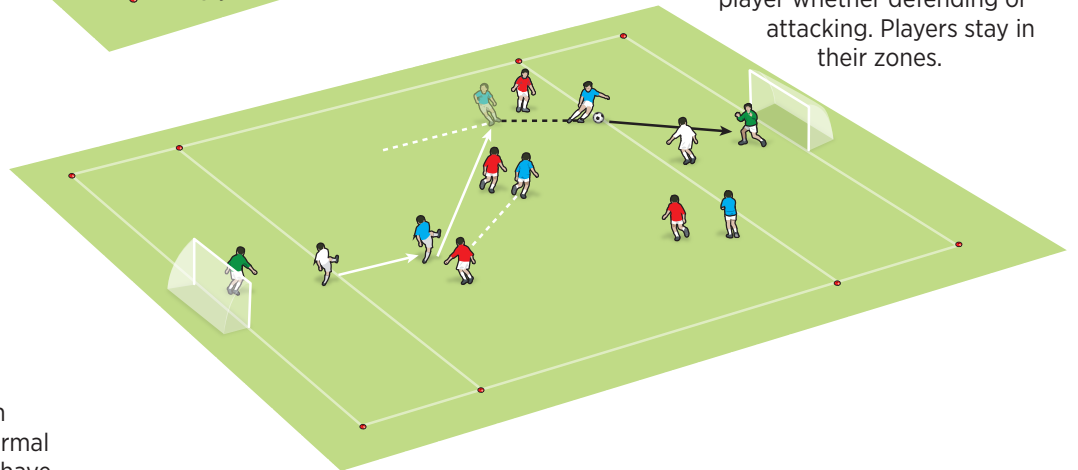
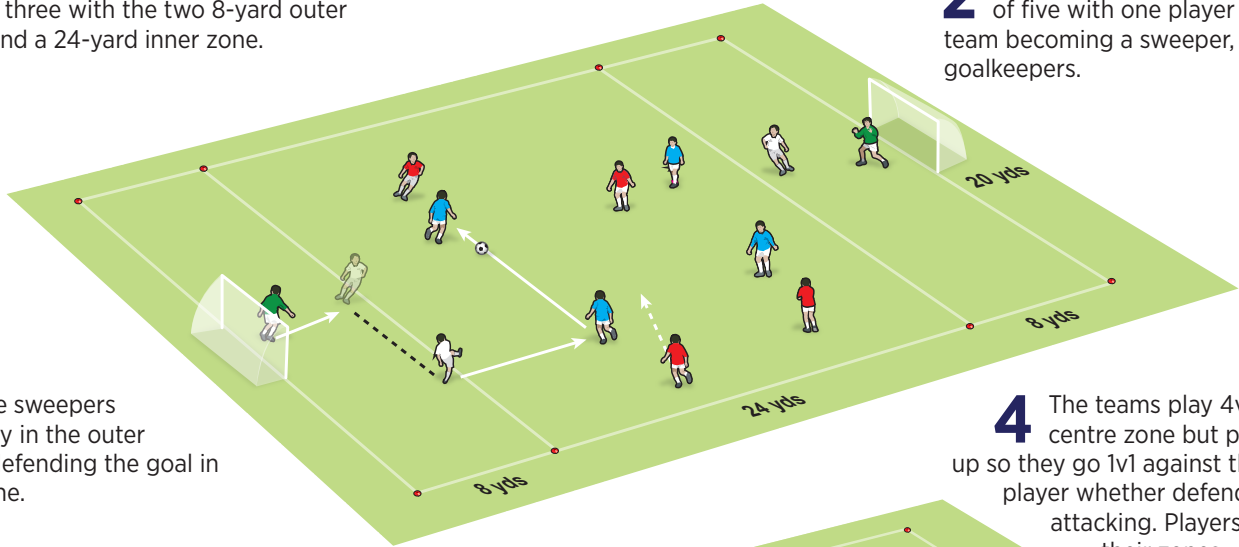
1 Set up a 40 x 20 yards area split into three with the two 8-yard outer zones and a 24-yard inner zone.

2 Split your players into two teams of five with one player in each team becoming a sweeper, plus two goalkeepers.

3 The sweepers play in the outer zones defending the goal in that zone.

4 The teams play 4v4 in the centre zone but pair them up so they go 1v1 against the same player whether defending or attacking. Players stay in their zones.

5 In the final part of the session clear the zones and play a normal 6v6 game and see if your players have learned how to cover and defend 1v1.



GAME PLAY

Defending 1v1 in midfield.
Shadowing and pressing.
Shielding and passing.

How many players do I need?

We used 12 players for this game.

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

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U14

ATTACKING

Dribble with the ball and shoot

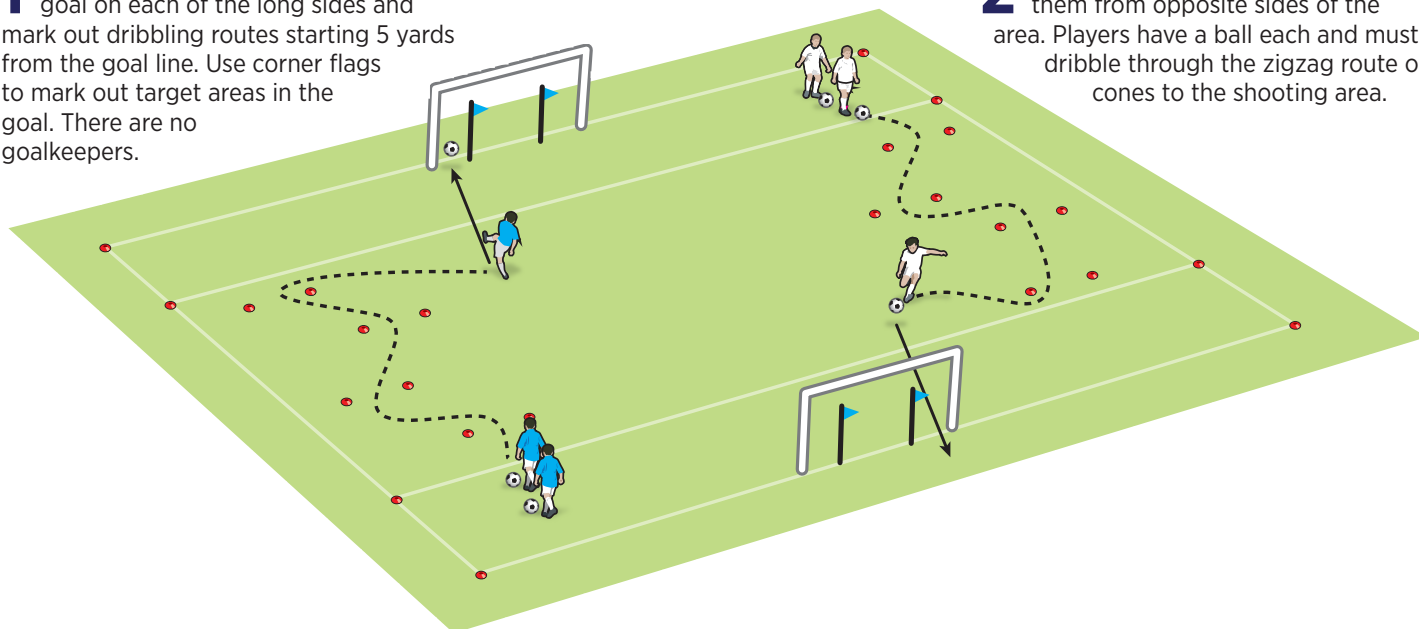
ACTIVITY: WIN THE 1v1s

CALL OUT

“Keep the ball in front of you” • “Good first touch to get the ball out of your feet” • “Accuracy over power” • “Keep control of the ball”

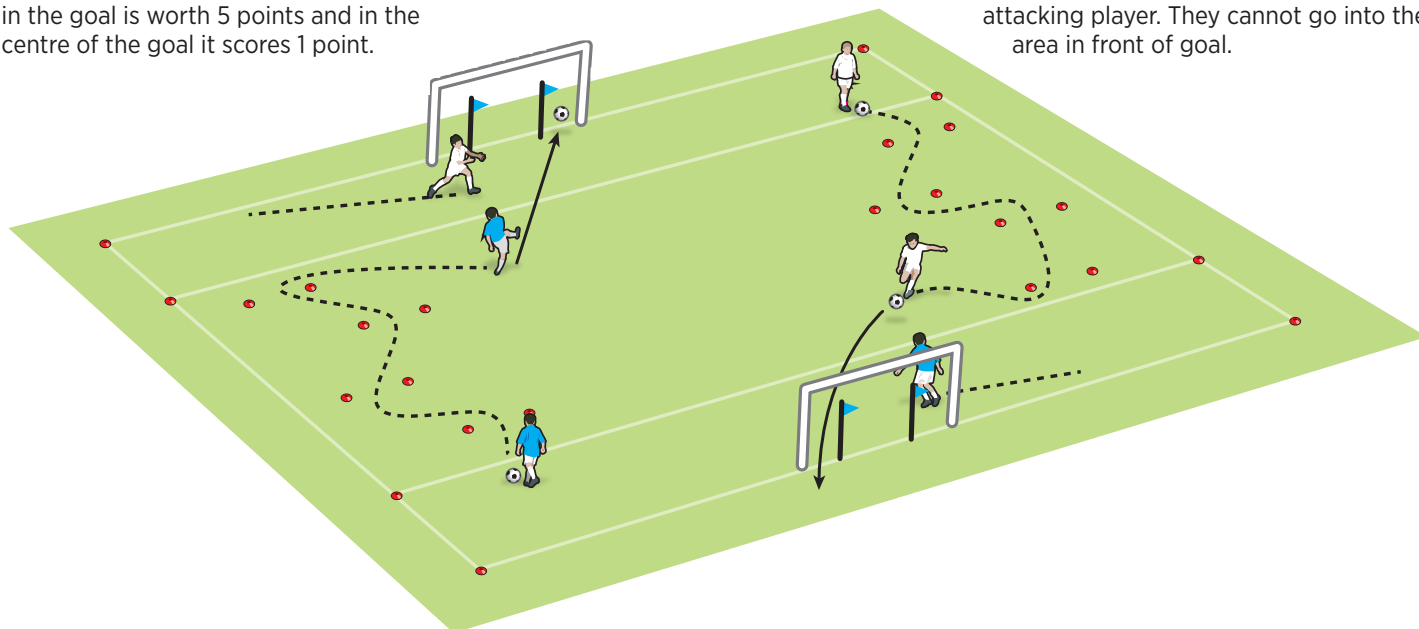
1 Set up a 20 x 40 yards area with a goal on each of the long sides and mark out dribbling routes starting 5 yards from the goal line. Use corner flags to mark out target areas in the goal. There are no goalkeepers.

2 Put players in two teams and start them from opposite sides of the area. Players have a ball each and must dribble through the zigzag route of cones to the shooting area.



3 After passing the last cone a player has three seconds to pick his spot and shoot. Scoring outside either flag in the goal is worth 5 points and in the centre of the goal it scores 1 point.

4 In the progression make one attacker a defender on each team and they try to block any shot from the attacking player. They cannot go into the area in front of goal.



How many players do I need?

We used six players in this activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U14 | ATTACKING 1

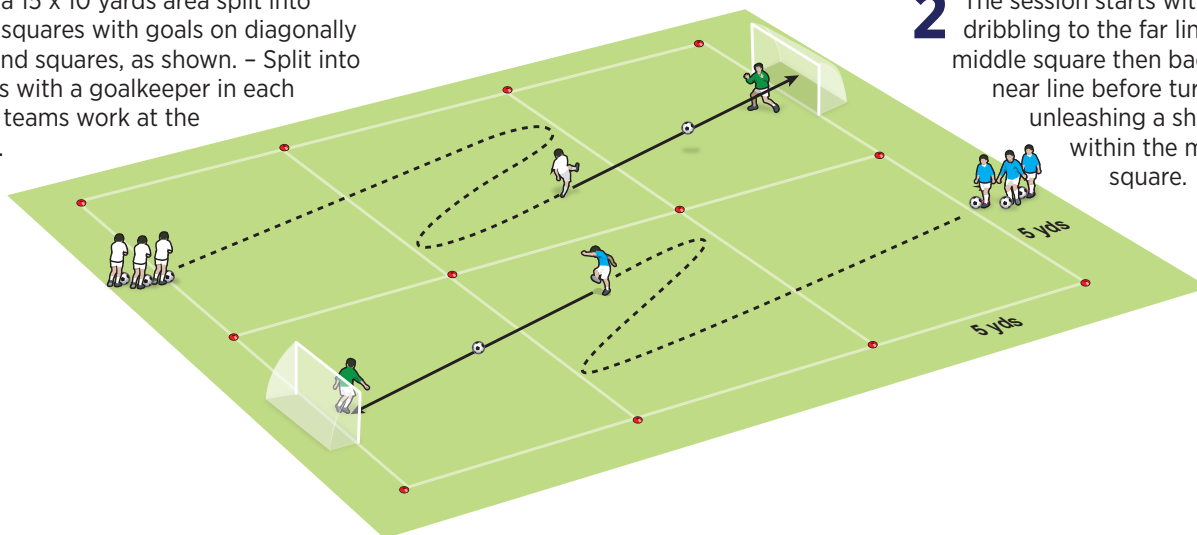
Dribble with the ball and shoot

GAME: ACCURATE DRIBBLES AND SHOTS

CALL OUT

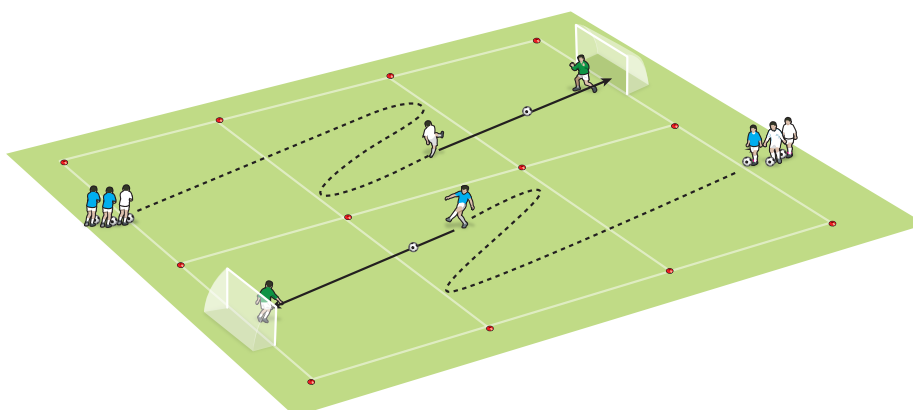
“Keep the ball in front of you” • “Good first touch to get the ball out of your feet” • “Accuracy over power” • “Keep control of the ball”

1 Set up a 15 x 10 yards area split into 5-yard squares with goals on diagonally opposite end squares, as shown. – Split into even teams with a goalkeeper in each goal. Both teams work at the same time.

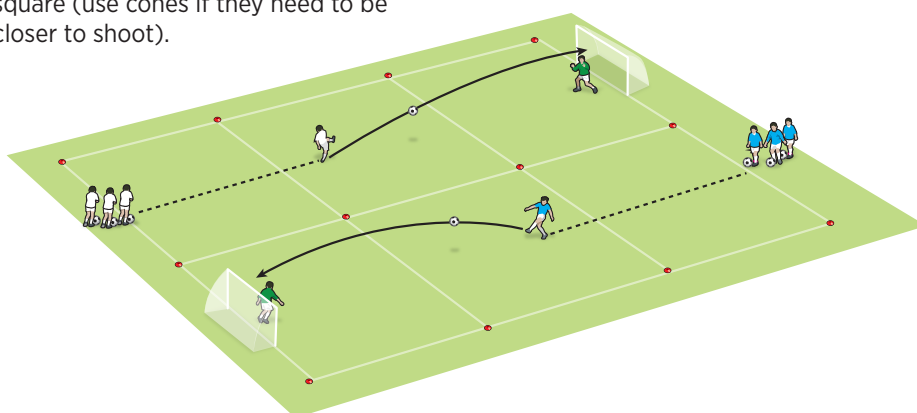


2 The session starts with players dribbling to the far line of the middle square then back to the near line before turning and unleashing a shot from within the middle square.

3 Once a player has taken a shot, he must retrieve his ball and join the back of the other team. Switch goalkeepers every few minutes.



4 Progress the session so the players have to shoot first time as soon as they go into the middle square (use cones if they need to be closer to shoot).



5 Intensity of the turn and shot is vital to the session. Try different shots – chip, drive, place and use both feet.

GAME PLAY

Accurate shooting is key.
Look at the ball and keep looking up for direction.
Watch the position of the keeper.

How many players do I need?

We used 10 players in the session but you can adapt numbers to suit your squad.

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

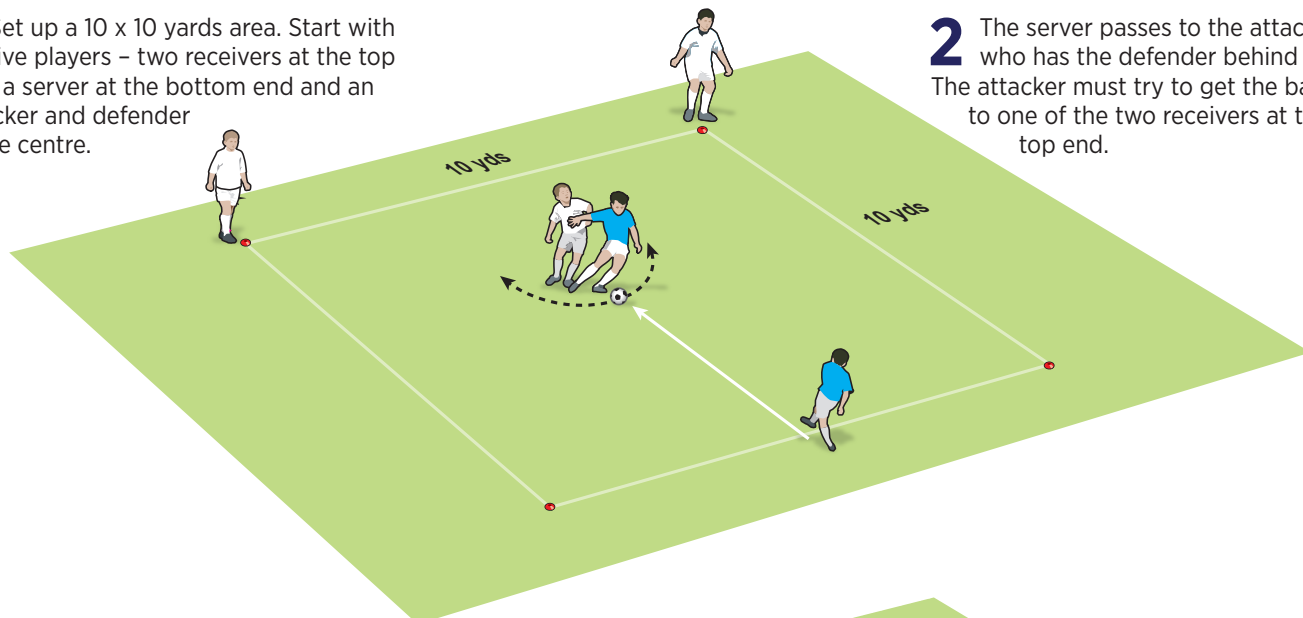
Develop turning skills

ACTIVITY: CREATE SPACE TO TURN

CALL OUT

“Make quick decisions” • “Change direction to fool the defender” • “Keep your body between the defender and the ball” • “Keep control of the ball”

1 Set up a 10 x 10 yards area. Start with five players – two receivers at the top end, a server at the bottom end and an attacker and defender in the centre.

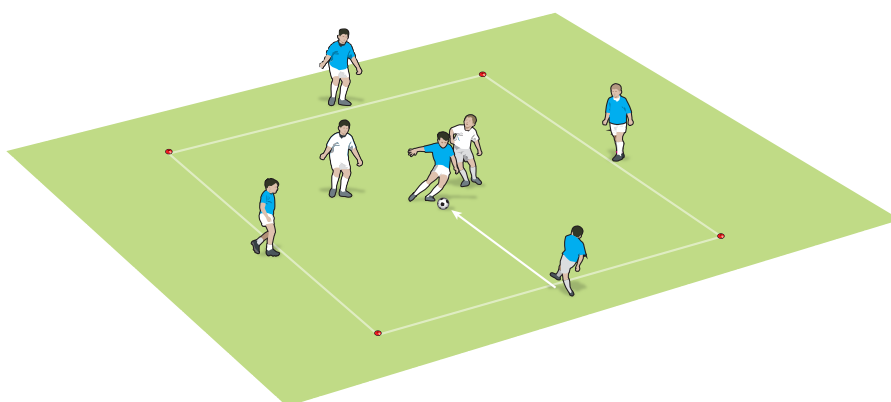


2 The server passes to the attacker who has the defender behind him. The attacker must try to get the ball to one of the two receivers at the top end.

3 Keeping the defender at arms length, the attacker leans into the defender and rolls around them and into the space to make the pass. To make sure the defender is an arms length away, the attacker should hold his arm out and touch the defender.



4 In the progression you need three receivers – positioned on three sides of the square – and a second defender plus the server and the first defender in the centre.



5 Now the attacker has to work much harder to get a pass away. Allow him to release the ball back to the server if he gets blocked.

How many players do I need?

We used seven players in this activity – five in the first part and then another two in the progression.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U14 | ATTACKING 2

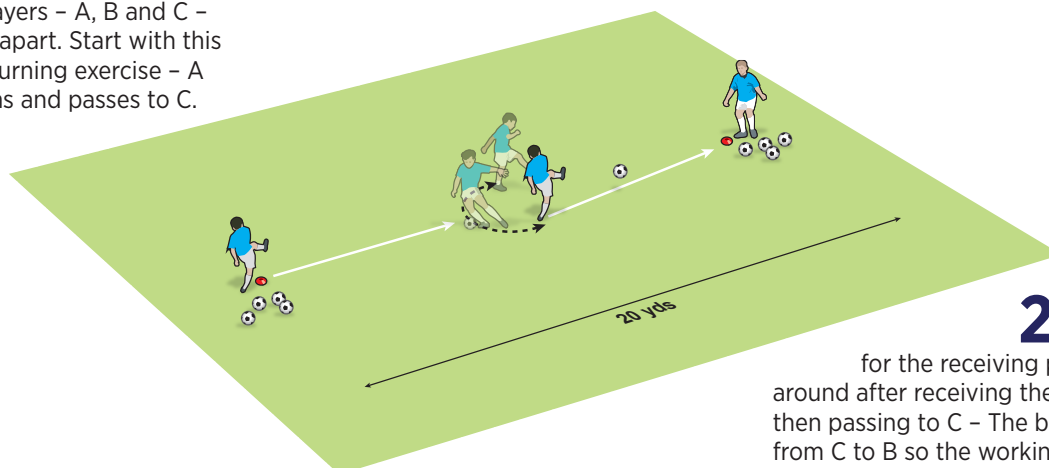
Develop turning skills

GAME: CREATE SPACE TO TURN

CALL OUT

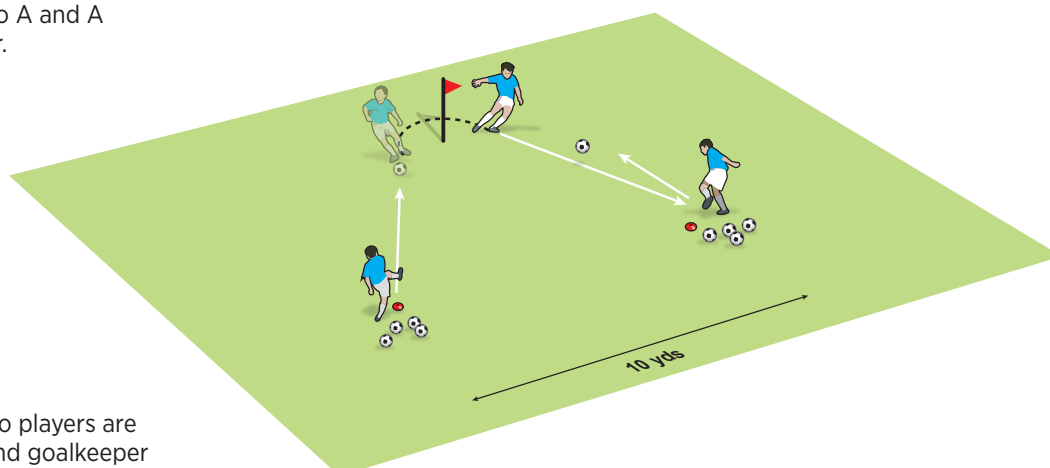
“Make quick decisions” • “Change direction to fool the defender” • “Keep your body between the defender and the ball” • “Keep control of the ball”

1 Position three players – A, B and C – in a line 10 yards apart. Start with this simple passing and turning exercise – A passes to B who turns and passes to C.

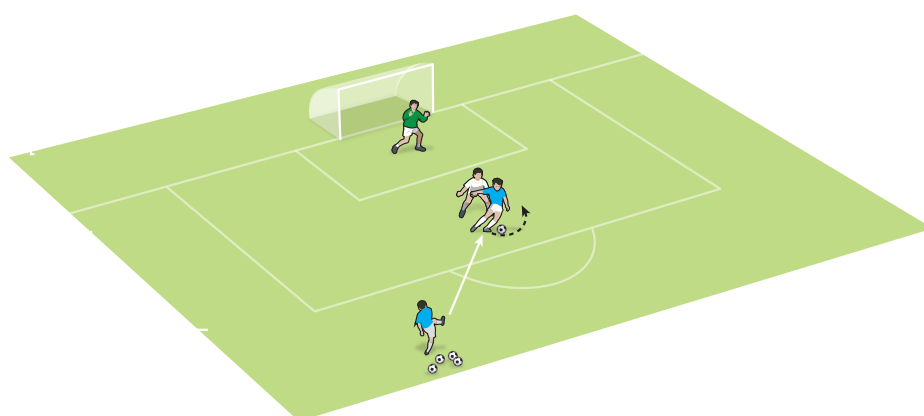


2 Then you need a pole for the receiving player to turn around after receiving the ball from A then passing to C – The ball comes back from C to B so the working player is turning both ways around the pole.

3 Move play on after four turns so B goes to C, C dribbles to A and A becomes the turning player.



4 Progress the session so players are working with a goal and goalkeeper – get them to try the turning exercise in a match-like situation.



5 While controlling the ball the player turns to the left, swinging his body around ready to take a route towards the goal i.e. away from the defender, who will struggle to make a challenge if the control and turn is made skilfully enough.

GAME PLAY

Turn technique is key to the session.
Accuracy with shots and passing.
Work the goalkeeper.

How many players do I need?

This game requires three players and a goalkeeper.

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

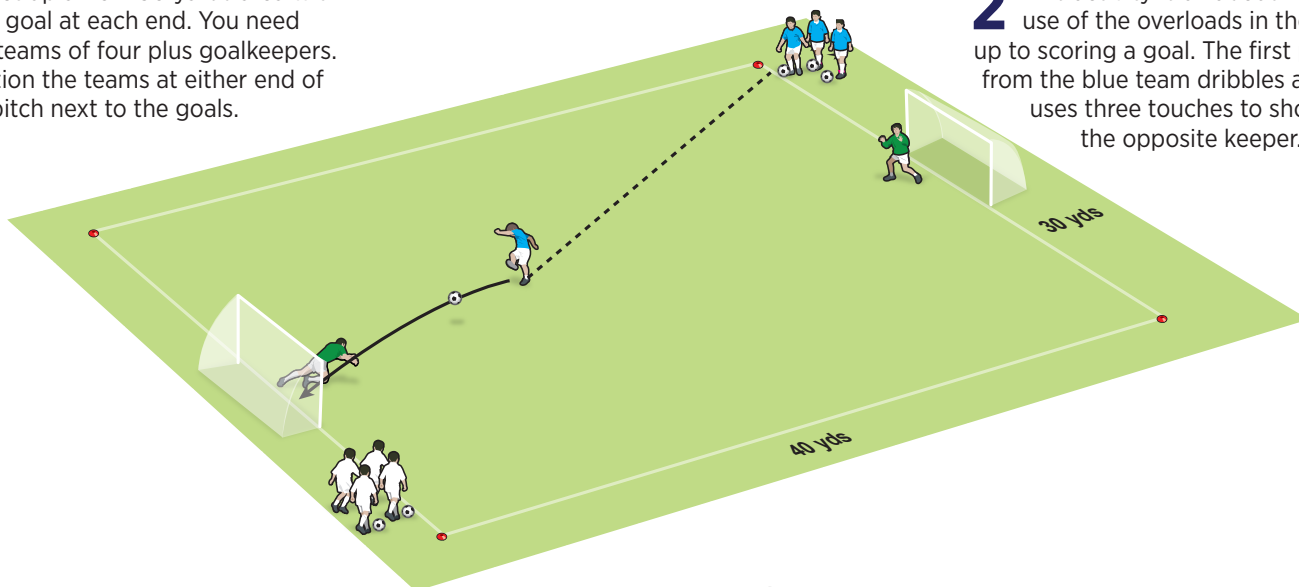
Attacking build up play

ACTIVITY: CHANGING OVERLOADS

CALL OUT

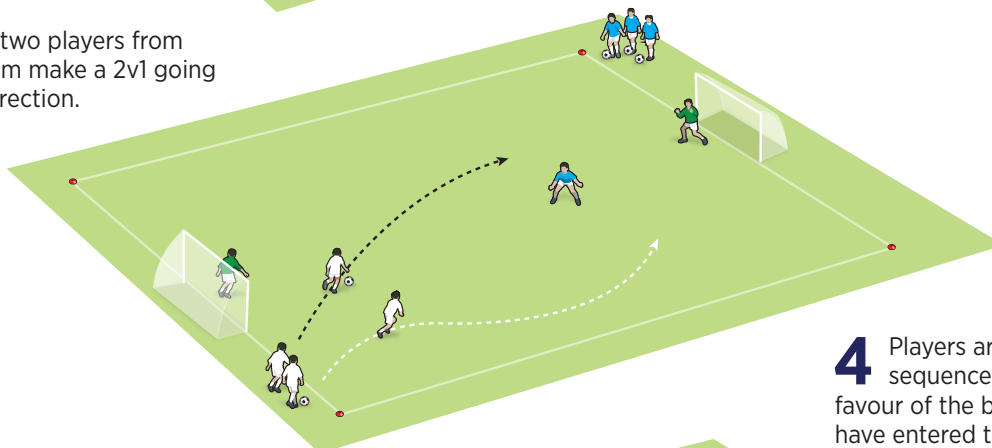
“Look at the player you are passing to” • “Good first touch to get the ball out of your feet” • “Look where you are passing” • “Move to receive the pass”

1 Set up a 40 x 30 yards area with a goal at each end. You need two teams of four plus goalkeepers. Position the teams at either end of the pitch next to the goals.



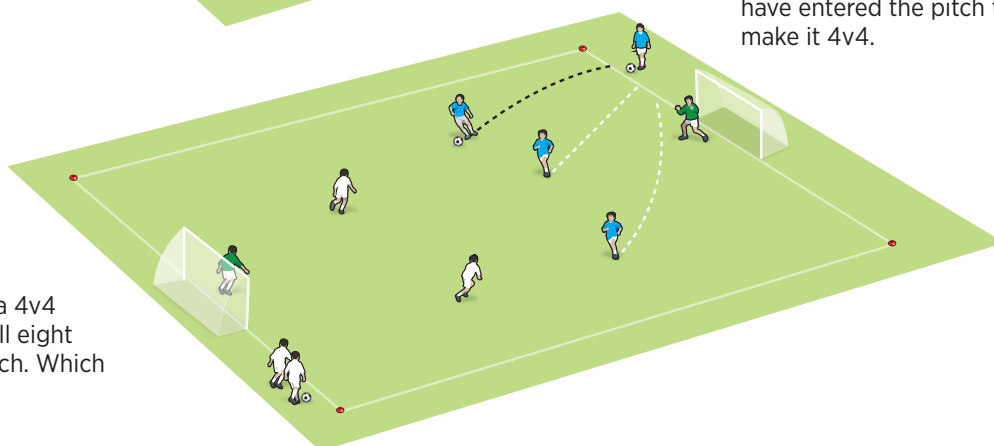
2 This activity is all about making use of the overloads in the build-up to scoring a goal. The first player from the blue team dribbles and uses three touches to shoot at the opposite keeper.

3 Immediately two players from the white team make a 2v1 going in the opposite direction.



4 Players are then added in sequence – so next it’s a 3v2 in favour of the blues – until all players have entered the pitch to finally make it 4v4.

5 End the session with a 4v4 game and play until all eight balls have gone off the pitch. Which team has the most goals?



How many players do I need?

We used 10 players for this activity.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U14 | ATTACKING 3

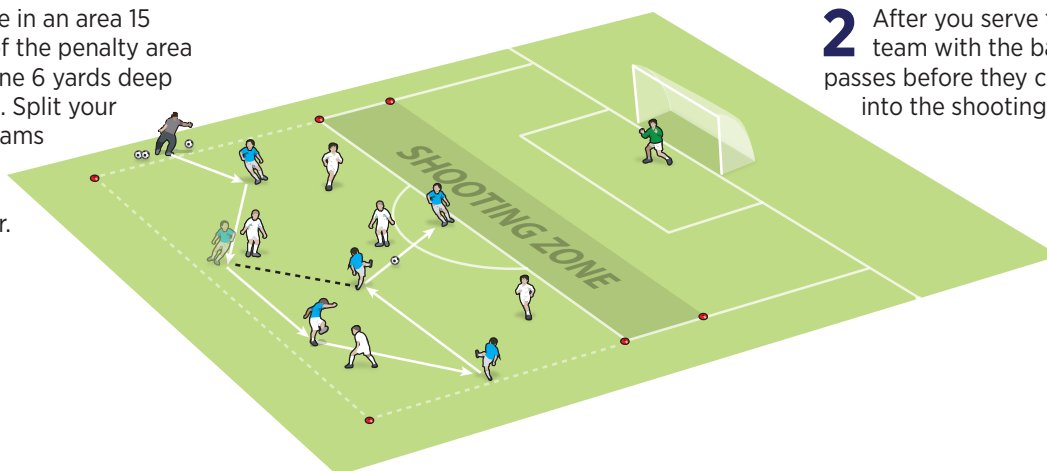
Attacking build up play

GAME: CHANGING OVERLOADS

CALL OUT

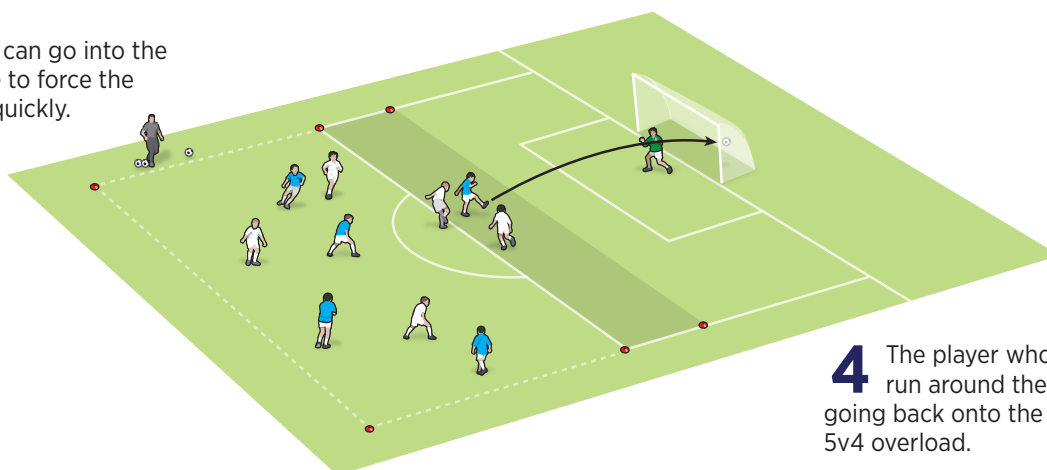
“Look at the player you are passing to” • “Good first touch to get the ball out of your feet” • “Look where you are passing” • “Move to receive the pass”

1 Play takes place in an area 15 yards in front of the penalty area with a shooting zone 6 yards deep in the penalty area. Split your players into two teams of five plus a single goalkeeper and you as a server.



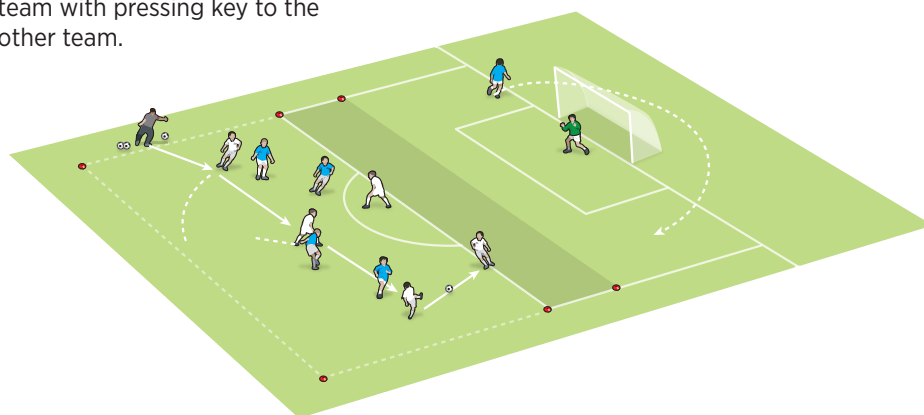
2 After you serve the ball in, the team with the ball must make 5 passes before they can play a pass into the shooting zone.

3 One defender can go into the shooting zone to force the attacker to shoot quickly.



4 The player who shoots must run around the goal before going back onto the pitch leaving a 5v4 overload.

5 Vision, awareness, good passing and receiving for the possession team with pressing key to the other team.



GAME PLAY

Good first touch.
Accuracy with shots and passing.
Teamwork.

How many players do I need?

We used 11 players in this game – five on each team plus the goalkeeper.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

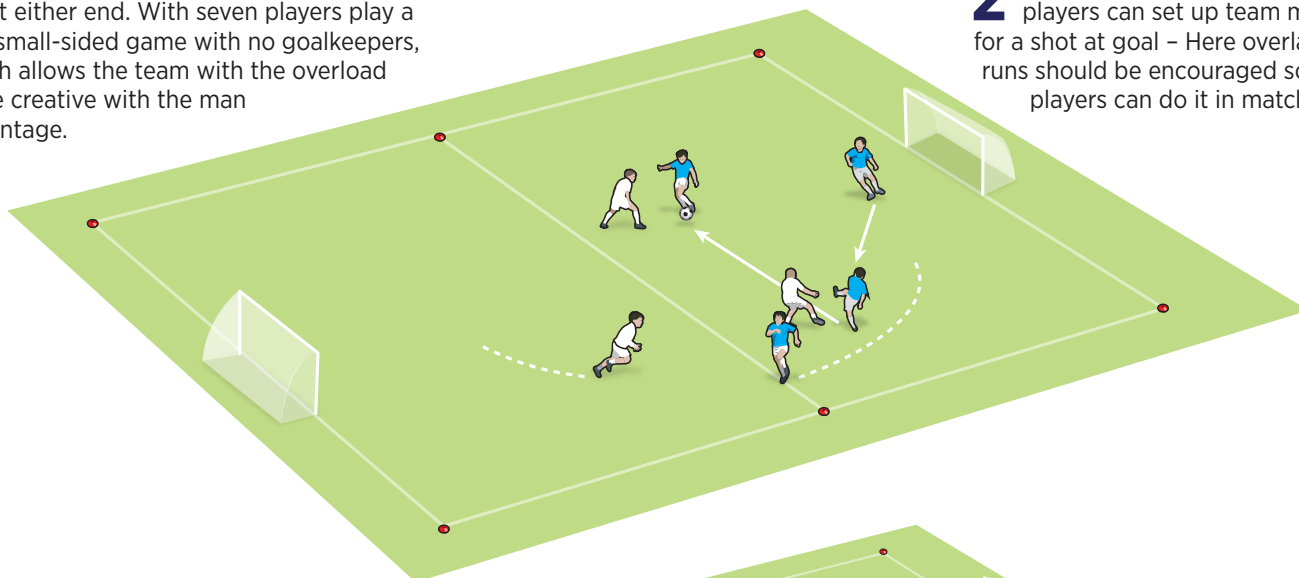
Creative in the final third

ACTIVITY: PENETRATE DEFENCES

CALL OUT

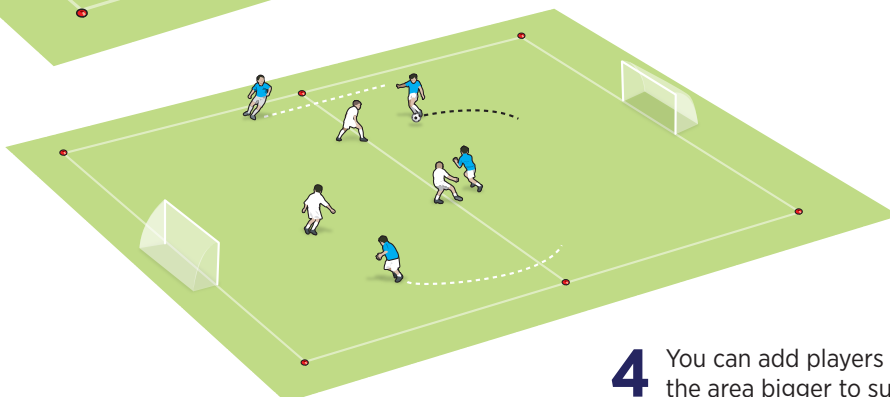
“Look at the player you are passing to” • “Good first touch” • “Look up before you shoot” • “Move at the right times”

1 Set up a 40 x 20 yards area with a goal at either end. With seven players play a 4v3 small-sided game with no goalkeepers, which allows the team with the overload to be creative with the man advantage.



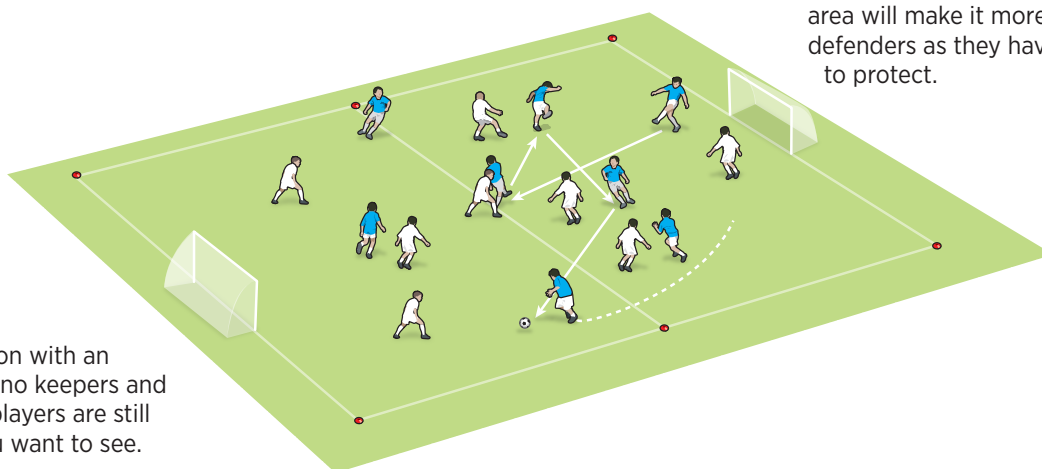
2 Having no goalkeepers means players can set up team mates for a shot at goal – Here overlapping runs should be encouraged so players can do it in matches.

3 Creative play is always difficult to coach because you want players to do the unexpected so allow the session to run for 5 or 6 minutes to give them a chance to experiment.



4 You can add players or make the area bigger to suit what it is you are trying to coach – a bigger area will make it more difficult for the defenders as they have more space to protect.

5 Finish the session with an 8v8 game with no keepers and watch to see if the players are still making the runs you want to see.



How many players do I need?

We used seven players for the session – 8v8 in the game.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U14 | ATTACKING 4

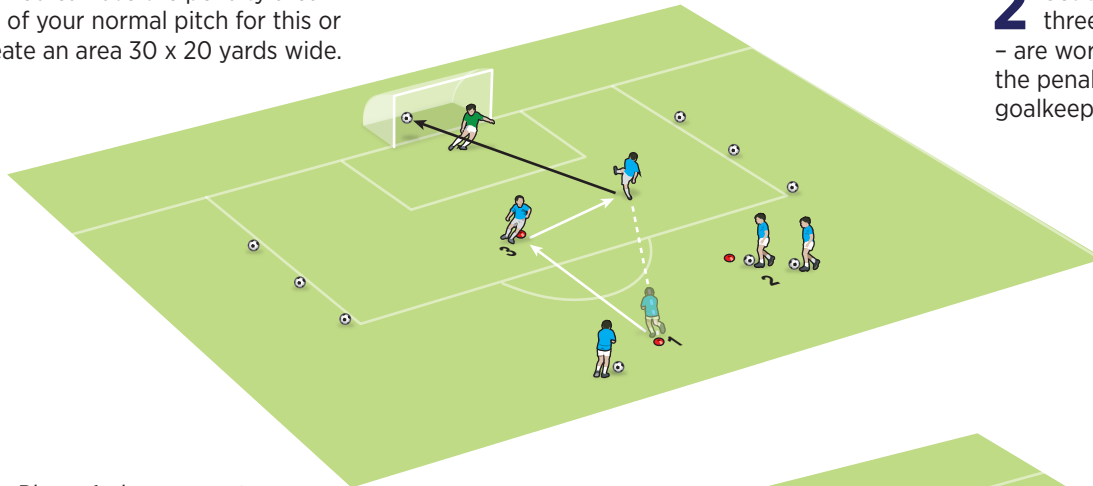
Creative in the final third

GAME: MOVEMENT IN THE PENALTY AREA

CALL OUT

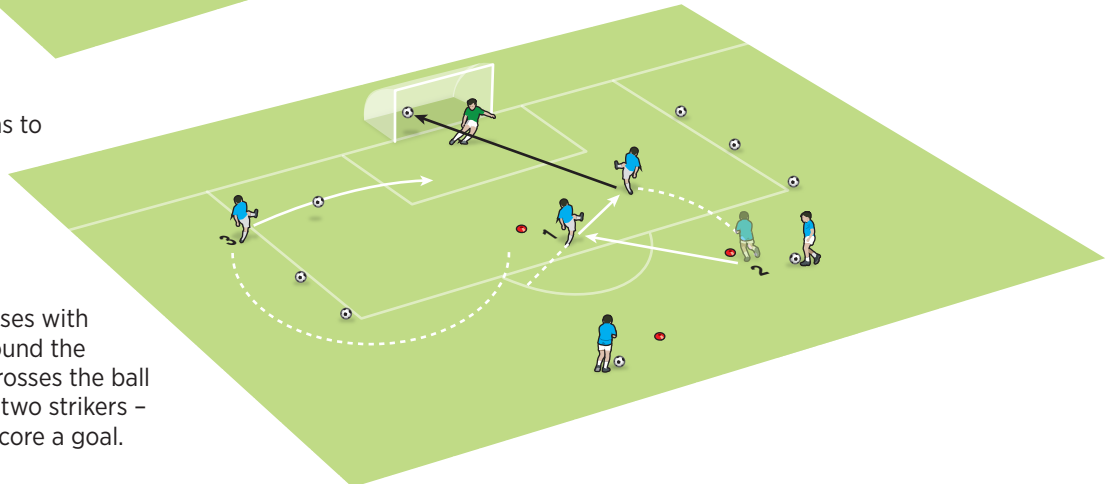
“Look at the player you are passing to” • “Good first touch” • “Look up before you shoot” • “Move at the right times”

1 You can use the penalty area of your normal pitch for this or create an area 30 x 20 yards wide.

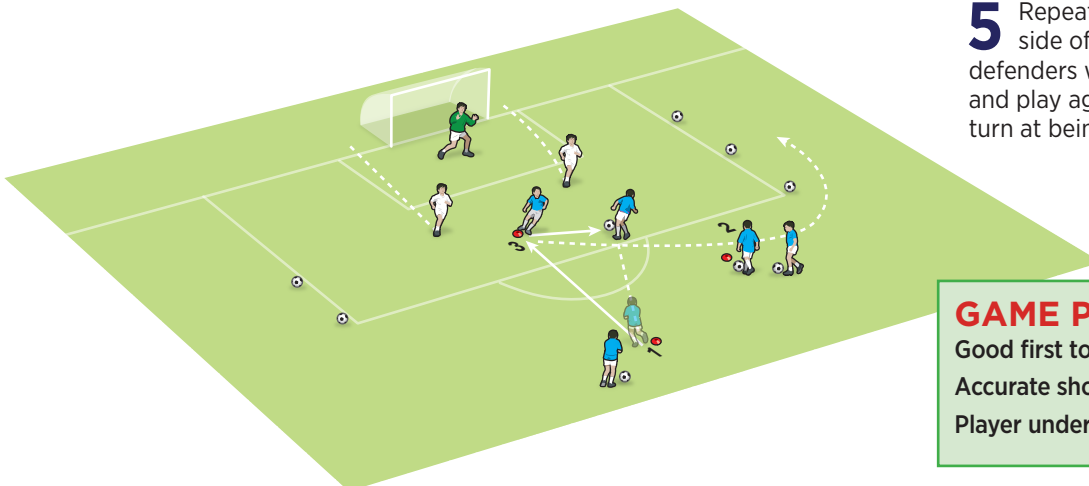


2 Set the players up so that three players – 1, 2 and 3 – are working around the D of the penalty area and there is a goalkeeper in goal.

3 Player 1 plays a one-two with player 3 and takes a shot at goal. Player 1 then turns to set up player 2 with a shot at goal.



4 As player 2 is trading passes with player 1, player 3 runs around the side of the penalty area and crosses the ball into the 6 yard box where the two strikers – players 1 and 2 – can try and score a goal.



5 Repeat this again on the other side of the pitch. Then add defenders who start next to the goal and play again. Allow all players a turn at being a striker.

GAME PLAY

Good first touch.
Accurate shooting.
Player understanding.

How many players do I need?

We used six players plus two defenders in the progression.

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

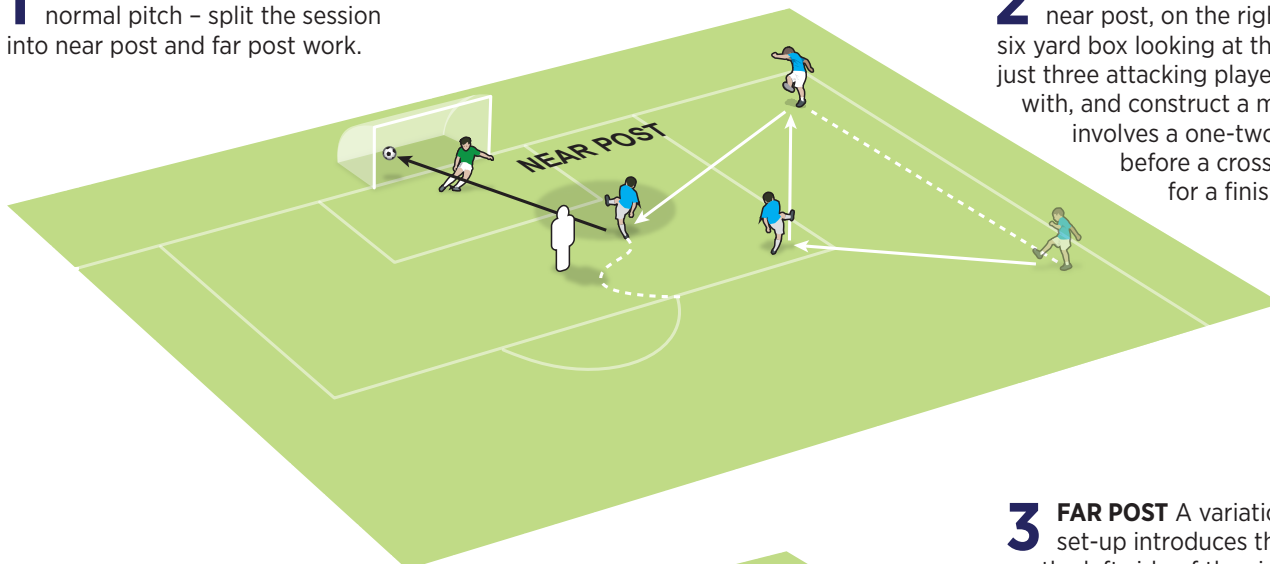
Score a goal

ACTIVITY: NEAR AND FAR POST ATTACK

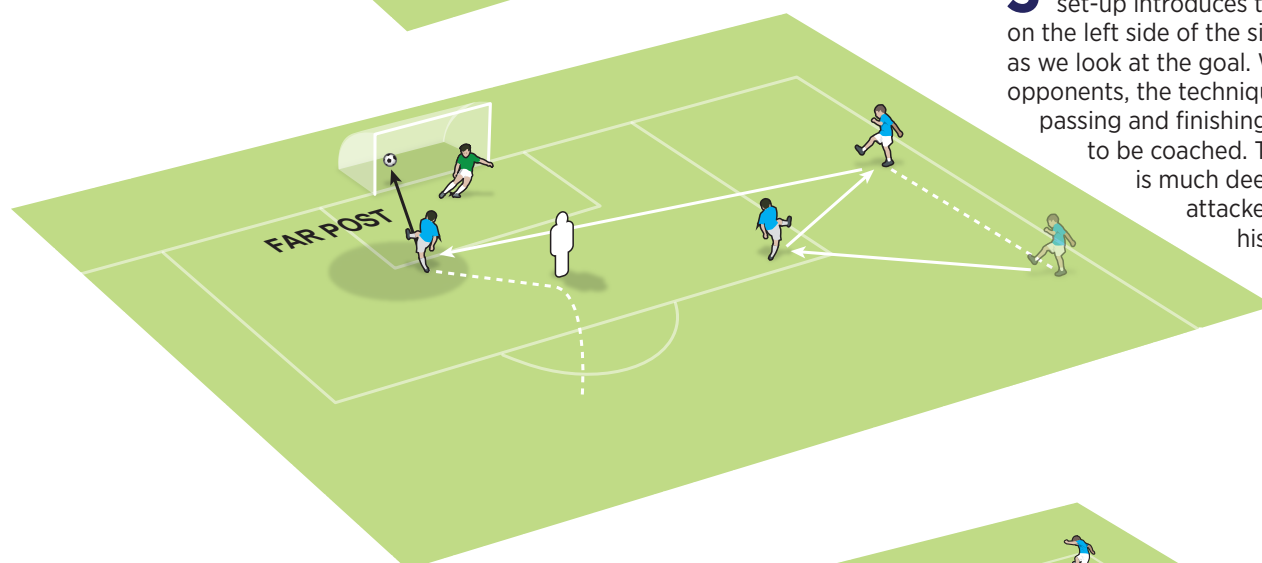
CALL OUT

“Hit the target” • “Good first touch” • “Look up before you shoot” • “Understand where to move”

1 Use the penalty area of your normal pitch – split the session into near post and far post work.

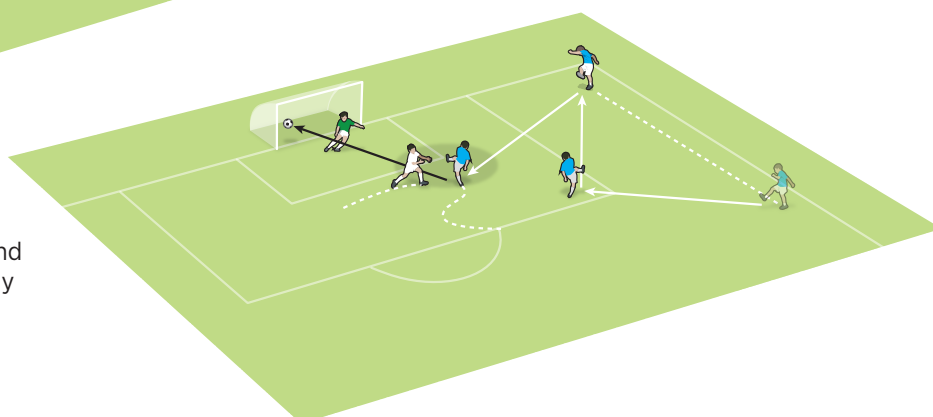


2 NEAR POST Work at first with the near post, on the right side of the six yard box looking at the goal. Using just three attacking players to begin with, and construct a move that involves a one-two on the wing before a cross into the box for a finish.



3 FAR POST A variation on that first set-up introduces the far post, on the left side of the six-yard pitch as we look at the goal. With no live opponents, the technique of crossing, passing and finishing is much easier to be coached. The cross now is much deeper so the attacker changes his run.

4 Once repetition of the cross and finish has seen players (notably the strikers) become comfortable with the concept of near and far post, replace the mannequin with a working defender.



How many players do I need?

We used four players for the session – plus one player for the progression.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U14 | ATTACKING 5

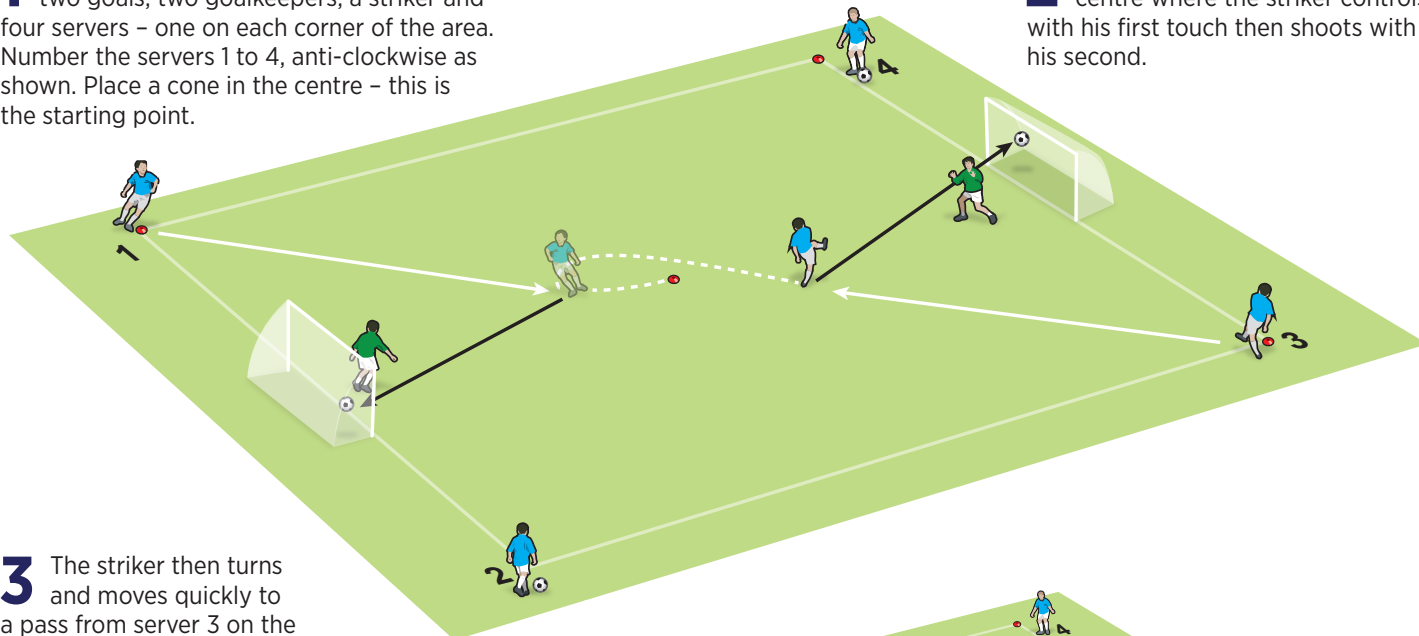
Score a goal

GAME: FOUR SHOT ROULETTE

CALL OUT

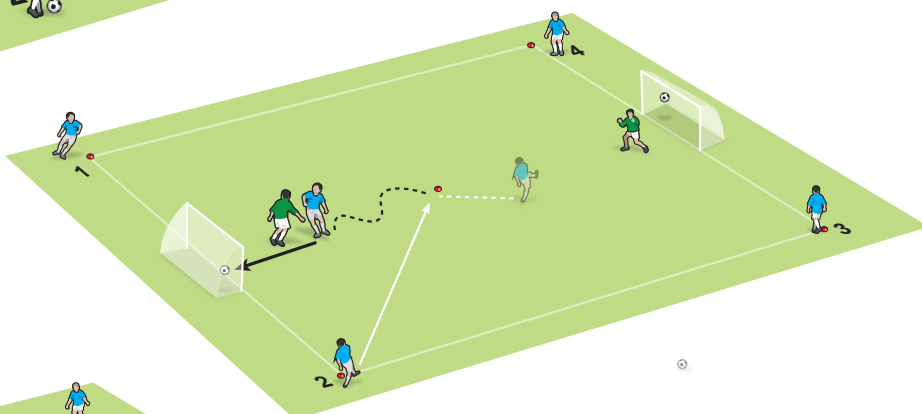
“Hit the target” • “Good first touch” • “Look up before you shoot” • “Understand where to move”

1 Create a 30 x 20 yards area- you'll need two goals, two goalkeepers, a striker and four servers - one on each corner of the area. Number the servers 1 to 4, anti-clockwise as shown. Place a cone in the centre - this is the starting point.

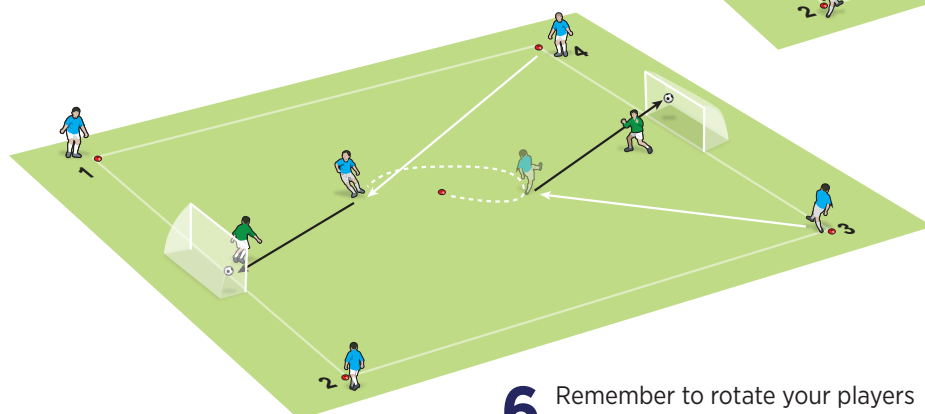


2 Server 1 plays the ball into the centre where the striker controls with his first touch then shoots with his second.

3 The striker then turns and moves quickly to a pass from server 3 on the opposite side of the area and repeats the task.



4 He then returns to the centre for a pass from server 2, but this time the striker must dribble and go 1v1 with the goalkeeper. He then quickly turns for a pass from server 1, controls and shoots.



5 In the final test the striker must shoot first time from passes by servers 3 and 4 - no controlling touch allowed.

6 Remember to rotate your players regularly so that everyone gets a chance to hone their striking skills.

GAME PLAY

Good first touch.
Accurate shooting.
Quick movement.

How many players do I need?

We used seven players in this game.

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

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U14

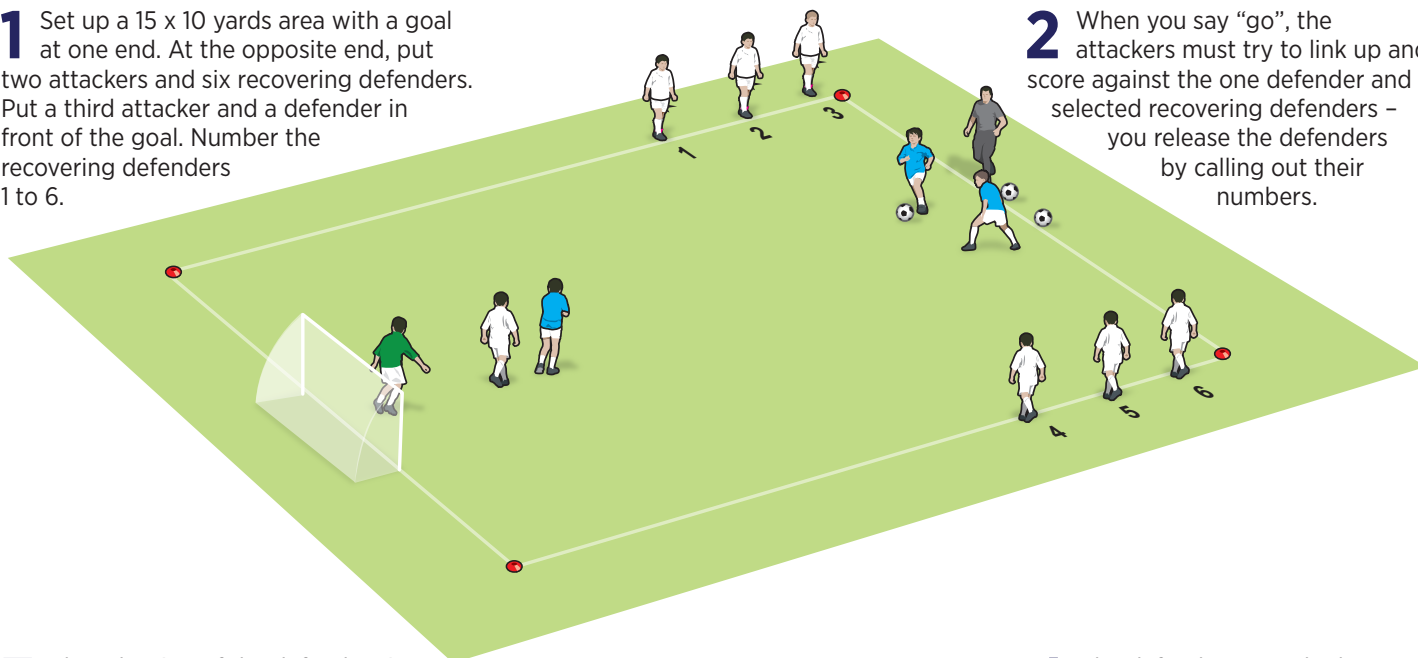
DEFENDING

Recover to a defensive position

GAME: BACK IN NUMBERS

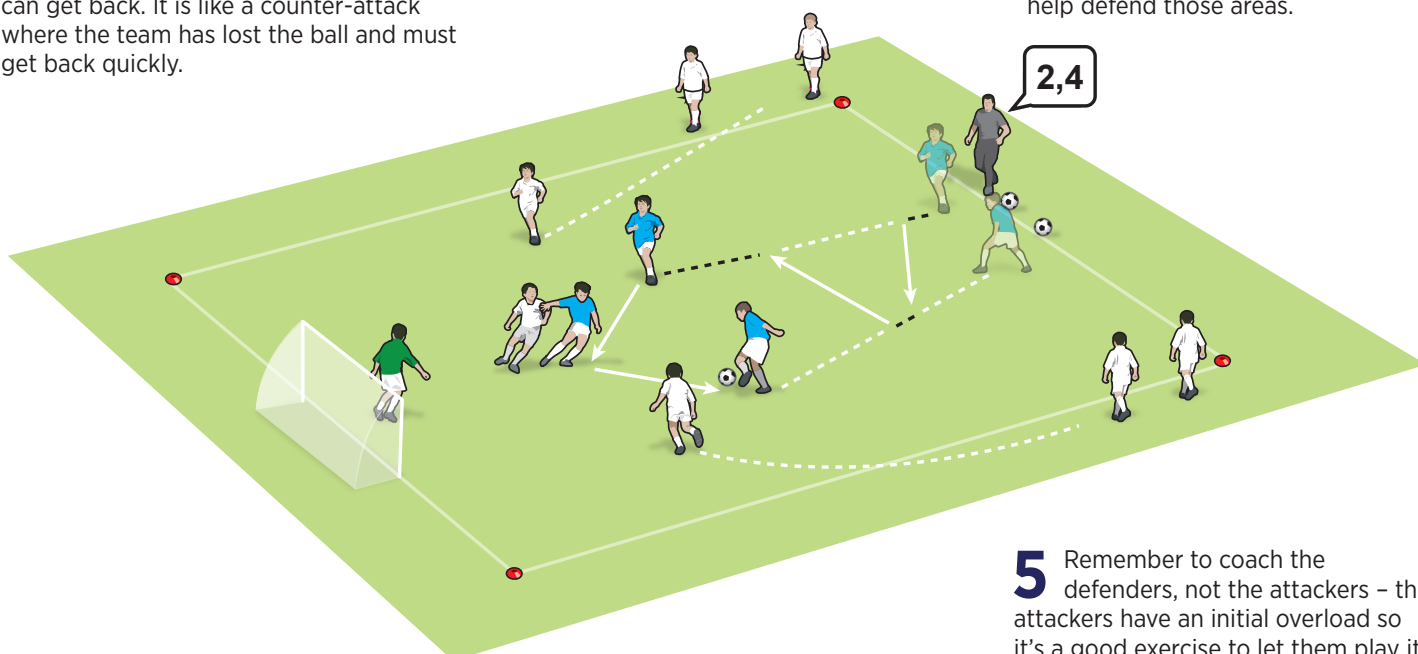
CALL OUT "Try to get back behind the ball" • "Get back to where you should be" • "React quickly" • "Can you delay the play?"

1 Set up a 15 x 10 yards area with a goal at one end. At the opposite end, put two attackers and six recovering defenders. Put a third attacker and a defender in front of the goal. Number the recovering defenders 1 to 6.



2 When you say "go", the attackers must try to link up and score against the one defender and selected recovering defenders - you release the defenders by calling out their numbers.

3 The releasing of the defenders is key to the success of the game - the quicker you release them the sooner they can get back. It is like a counter-attack where the team has lost the ball and must get back quickly.



4 The defenders must look at where the danger is coming from and look to get into positions to help defend those areas.

5 Remember to coach the defenders, not the attackers - the attackers have an initial overload so it's a good exercise to let them play it how they want.

How many players do I need?

We used 11 players in this game.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

U14 | DEFENDING 1

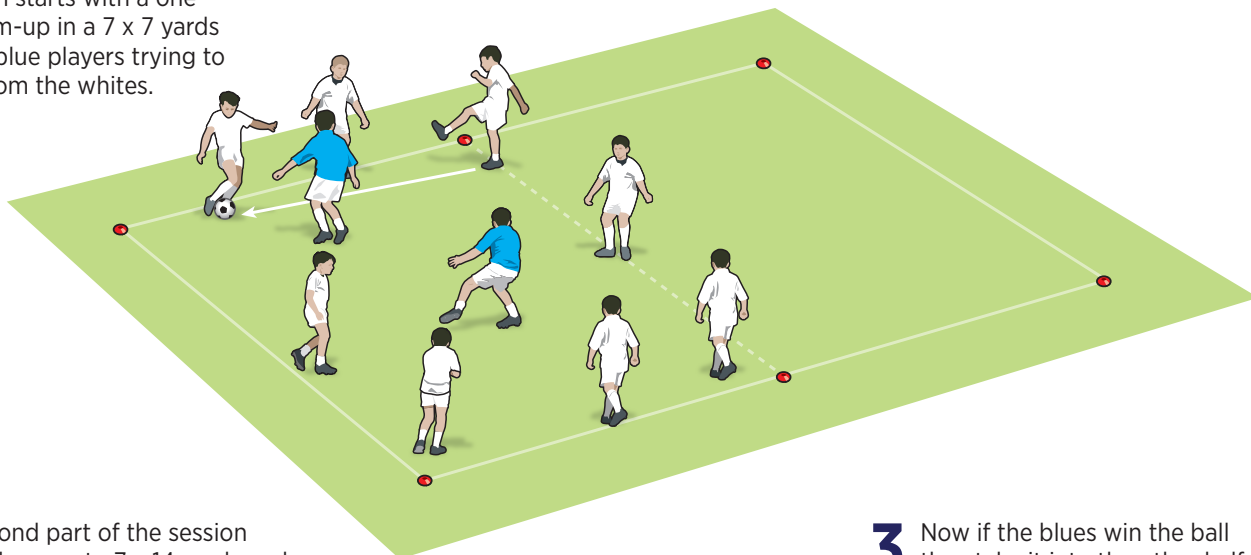
Recover to a defensive position

GAME: BACK IN NUMBERS

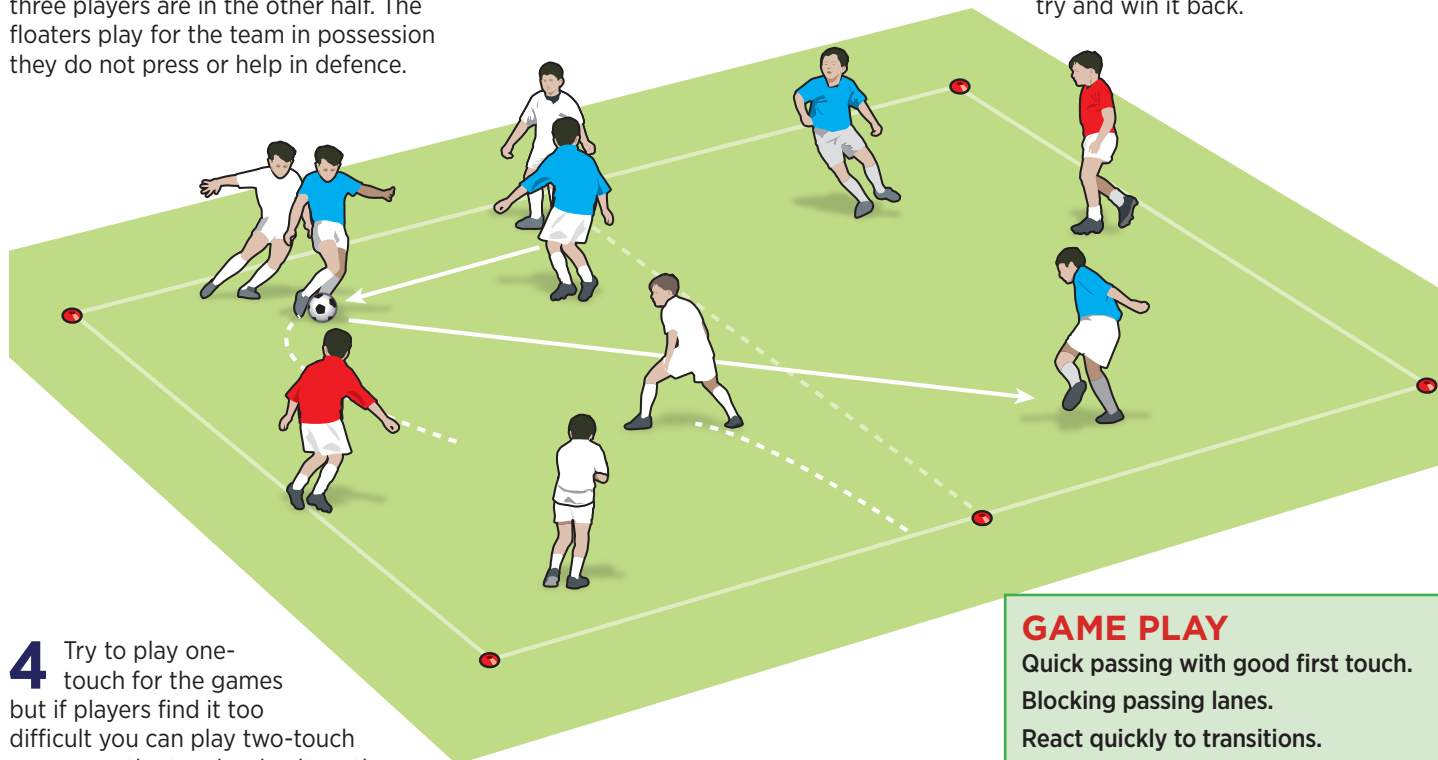
CALL OUT

“Try to get back behind the ball” • “Don’t stop running” • “Know where the ball is” • “Block shots if you can”

1 The session starts with a one-touch warm-up in a 7 x 7 yards area with the blue players trying to win the ball from the whites.



2 In the second part of the session increase the area to 7 x 14 yards and players are split so there are two teams of four players plus two floaters. Play a 5v2 overload in one half and the other three players are in the other half. The floaters play for the team in possession they do not press or help in defence.



3 Now if the blues win the ball they take it into the other half and the two blues who have won possession must recover and support quickly. Two white players follow to try and win it back.

4 Try to play one-touch for the games but if players find it too difficult you can play two-touch or remove the touch rule altogether.

GAME PLAY

Quick passing with good first touch.
Blocking passing lanes.
React quickly to transitions.

How many players do I need?

10 players are needed for this game.

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

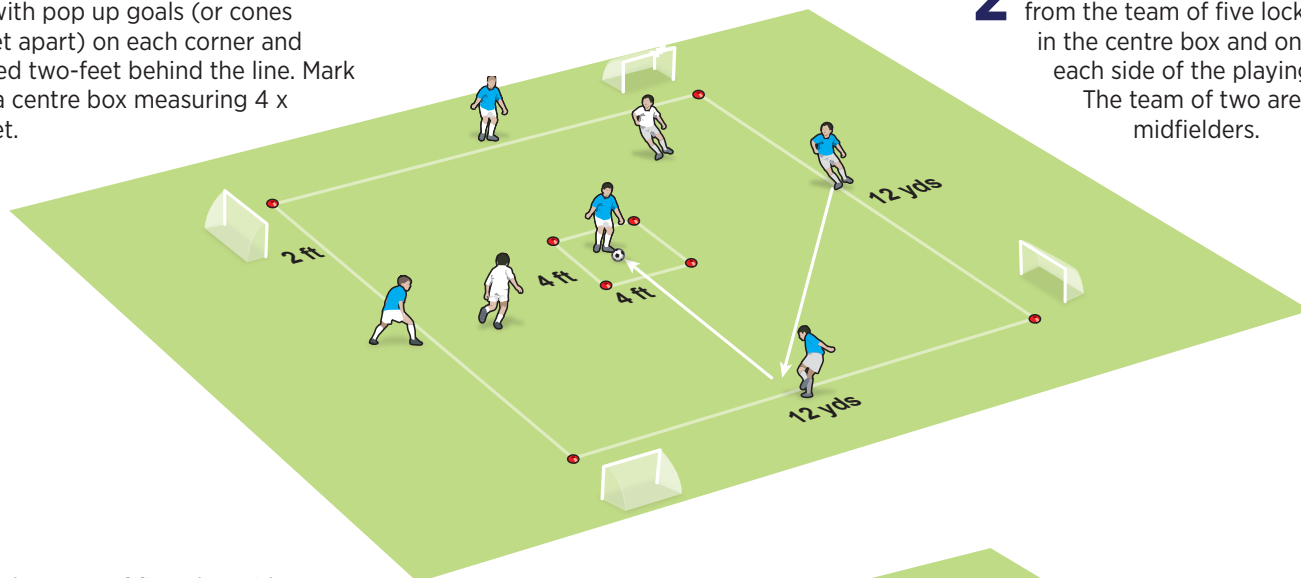
Block passing routes

ACTIVITY: STEAL THE BALL

CALL OUT

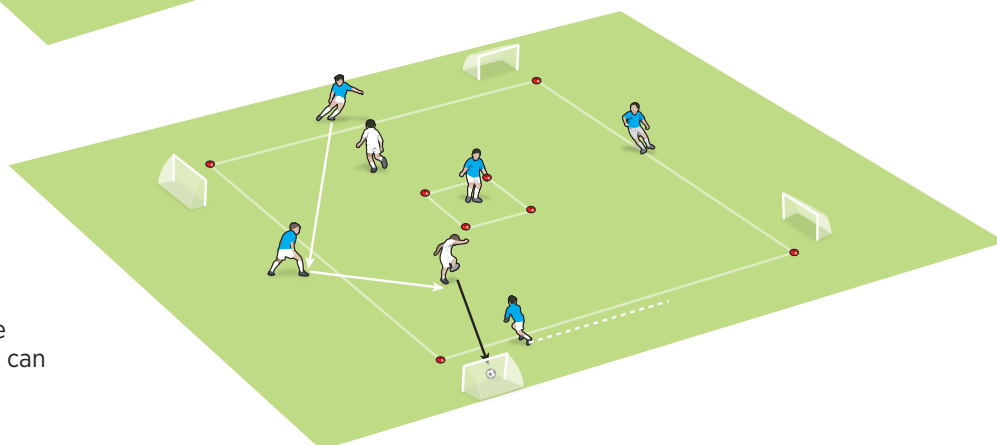
“Check where the passing options are” • “Support your team mate” • “Know where the ball is” • “Block passes or intercept the ball if you can”

1 Mark out a 12 x 12 yards square with pop up goals (or cones 3 feet apart) on each corner and placed two-feet behind the line. Mark out a centre box measuring 4 x 4 feet.



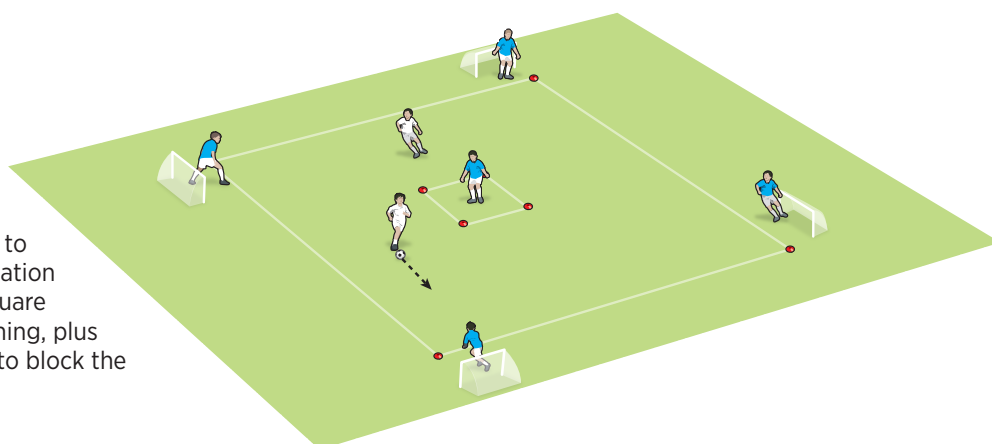
2 Play a 5v2 game with one player from the team of five locked in the centre box and one on each side of the playing area. The team of two are the midfielders.

3 The team of five play with two touches and the two midfielders must try to steal the ball.



4 As counter-attacking is vital, if the midfielders intercept the ball they can score in any of the four goals.

5 For each of the midfielders, the key to success is his starting position in relation to where the ball is, where the centre square is and where the opponents are. Positioning, plus anticipation, will enable the midfielders to block the opposition's passing routes.



How many players do I need?

We used seven players in this activity.

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

U14 | DEFENDING 2

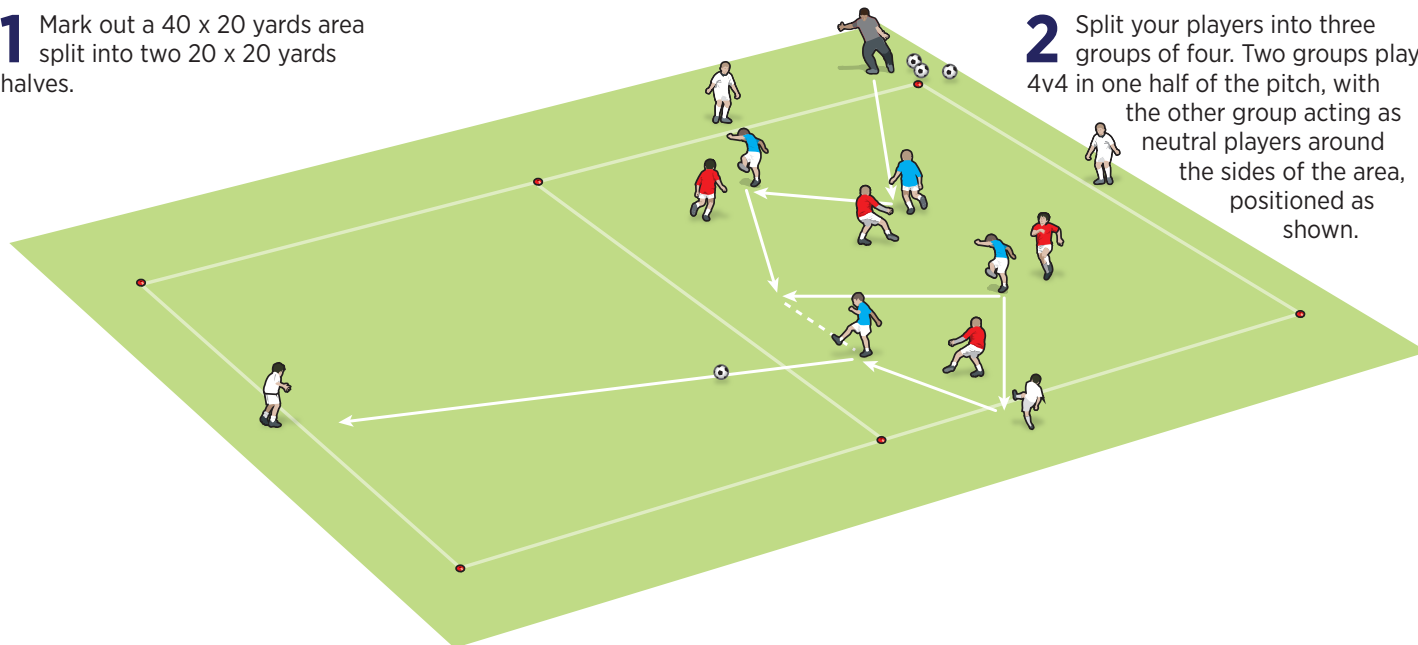
Block passing routes

GAME: BLOCK POSITIONING

CALL OUT

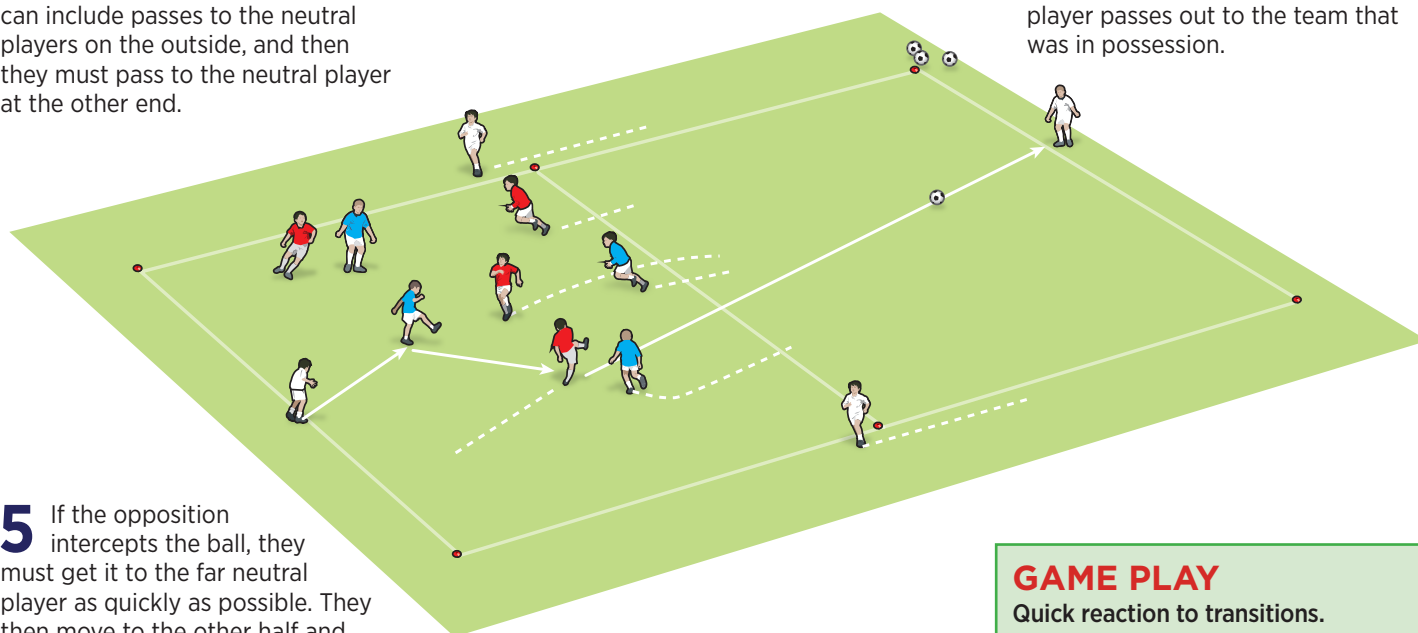
“Check where the passing options are” • “Support your team mate” • “Know where the ball is” • “Block passes or intercept the ball if you can”

1 Mark out a 40 x 20 yards area split into two 20 x 20 yards halves.



2 Split your players into three groups of four. Two groups play 4v4 in one half of the pitch, with the other group acting as neutral players around the sides of the area, positioned as shown.

3 The coach passes a ball into the area. The team that wins the ball must make five passes, which can include passes to the neutral players on the outside, and then they must pass to the neutral player at the other end.



4 If the pass to the neutral player is successful, everyone moves into the other half and the neutral player passes out to the team that was in possession.

5 If the opposition intercepts the ball, they must get it to the far neutral player as quickly as possible. They then move to the other half and retain possession.

GAME PLAY

Quick reaction to transitions.
Press play and win the ball.
Look up and see the pass.

How many players do I need?

We used 12 players in this game.

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

Defending in a group

ACTIVITY: WORK THE BACK FOUR

CALL OUT

“One player goes to the ball” • “Support your team mate” • “Move across to cover space” • “Watch the angle of attack and respond”

1 Use half an 11-a-side pitch with a goal for the second part of the session. In the first part players are walking through the defending positions in a back four.

2 Line the players up in a flat back four, with no opposition. The coach moves the ball around in front of the defence in order to ensure players adapt their position depending on where the ball is.

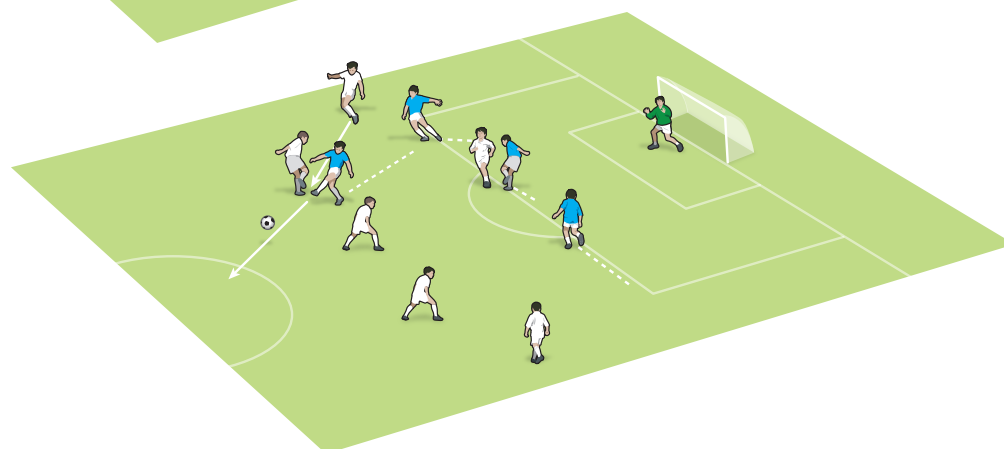
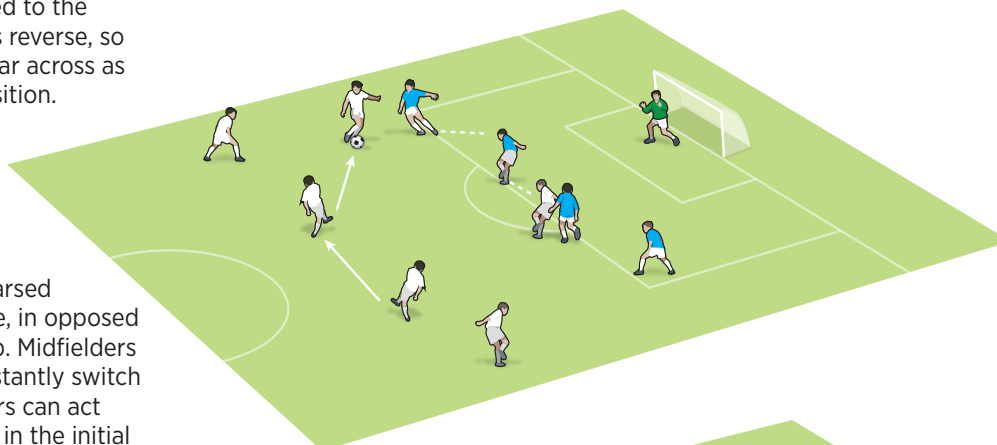
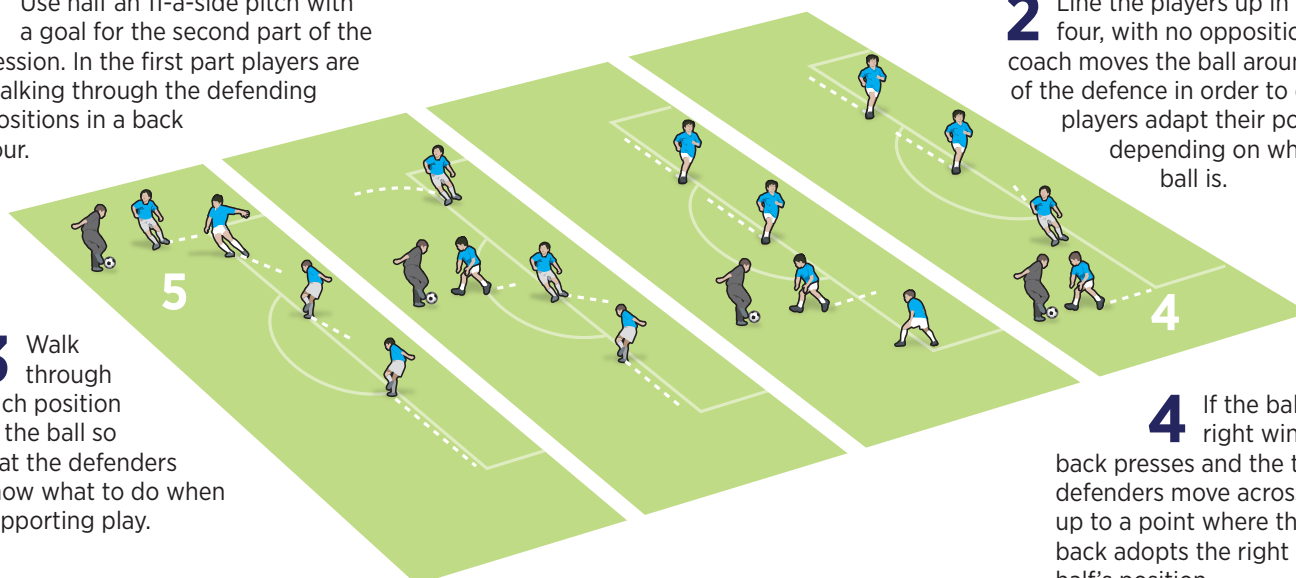
3 Walk through each position of the ball so that the defenders know what to do when supporting play.

5 If the ball is switched to the other side, the roles reverse, so the left-back comes as far across as the left centre-half's position.

4 If the ball is on the right wing, the left-back presses and the three other defenders move across to cover, up to a point where the right-back adopts the right centre-half's position.

6 Now use this rehearsed defensive structure, in opposed play, using a 6v4 set-up. Midfielders are encouraged to constantly switch play to ensure defenders can act on the principles learnt in the initial phase.

7 If a goal is scored, an attack intercepted, or the ball goes dead, the attacking team restarts play near the halfway line.



How many players do I need?

You need 11 players for this activity.

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

U14 | DEFENDING 3

Defending in a group

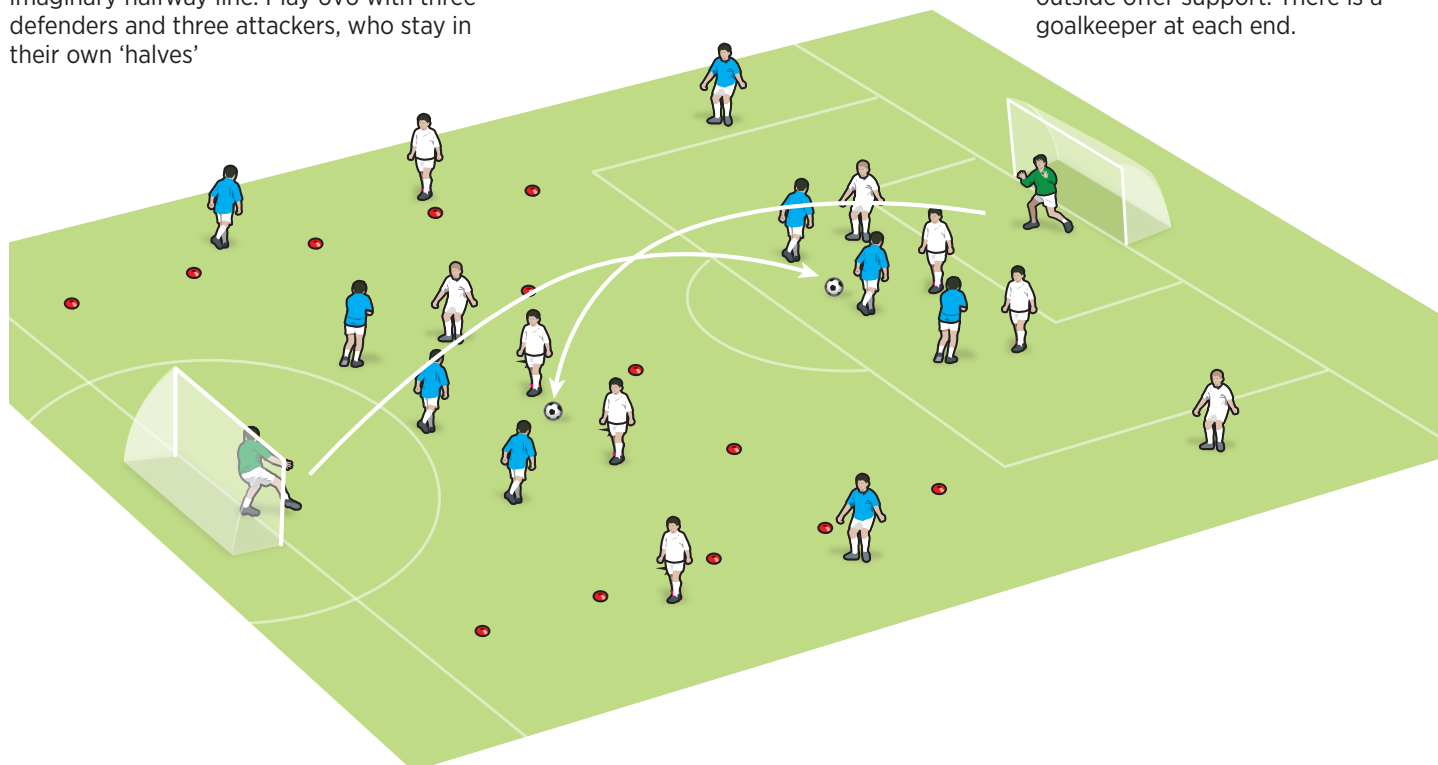
GAME: WORK THE BACK FOUR

CALL OUT

“One player goes to the ball” • “Support your team mate” • “Move across to cover space” • “Watch the angle of attack and respond”

1 This drill uses a strip within half a pitch with coloured cones marking out an imaginary halfway line. Play 6v6 with three defenders and three attackers, who stay in their own ‘halves’

2 Defenders mark opposing forwards. Six players on the outside offer support. There is a goalkeeper at each end.



3 The ball is transferred from the defenders or goalkeeper in one half to the forwards in the other, who try to score.

4 All forwards must touch the ball before a shot can be made – this forces players to move, change positions and create passing angles.

5 It also encourages the three forwards to support each other, cross over, make dummy runs off each other, demonstrate good close control and create movements to get shots in, while at the same time improving technique.

GAME PLAY

Stay with the player.
Cover players not the ball.
Concentration vital to success.

How many players do I need?

We used 20 players in this session.

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

U14 | DEFENDING 4

Control without the ball

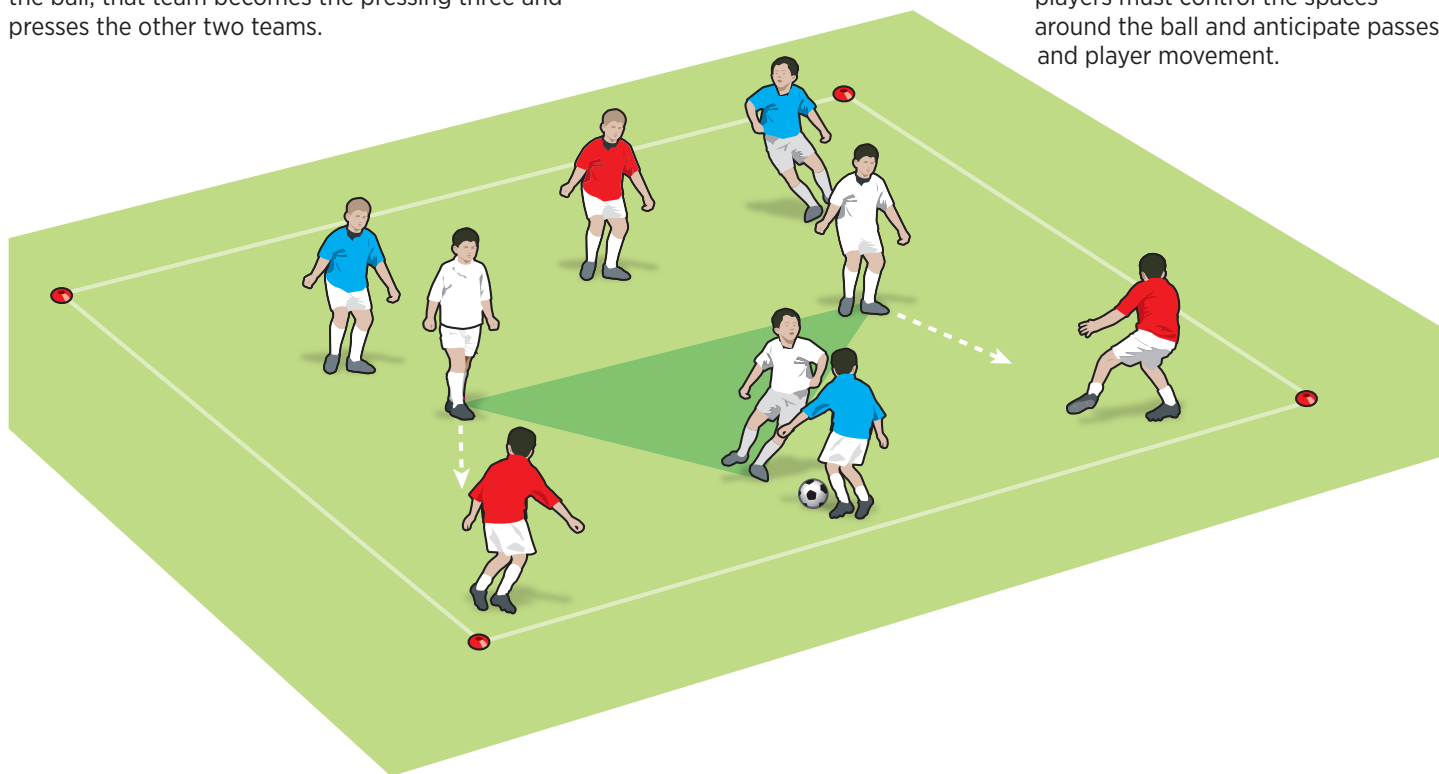
ACTIVITY: PRESSING THE BALL

CALL OUT

“One player goes to the ball” • “Support your team mate” • “Move across to cover space” • “Watch the angle of attack and respond”

1 In a 12 x 12 yards area, use three teams of three playing a 6v3 possession game – one team presses and the other two teams keep possession. There is no limit on touches. When a team loses the ball, that team becomes the pressing three and presses the other two teams.

2 The team of three defends in a triangle with the closest player to the ball applying intense aggressive pressure. The other two players must control the spaces around the ball and anticipate passes and player movement.



3 This is all about ball recovery, creating chaotic moments and controlling these moments by reacting quickly with skill, precision and communication – anticipation of where the next pass will go is a key coaching point.

4 Players must anticipate by blocking lines and keeping in the triangle shape to cause the most damage to the opposition possession game.

5 Expect the players to lose the ball a lot in this game as it is fast and needs good touches of the ball – counter-pressing will happen often.

How many players do I need?

We used nine players in the session.

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

U14 | DEFENDING 4

Control without the ball

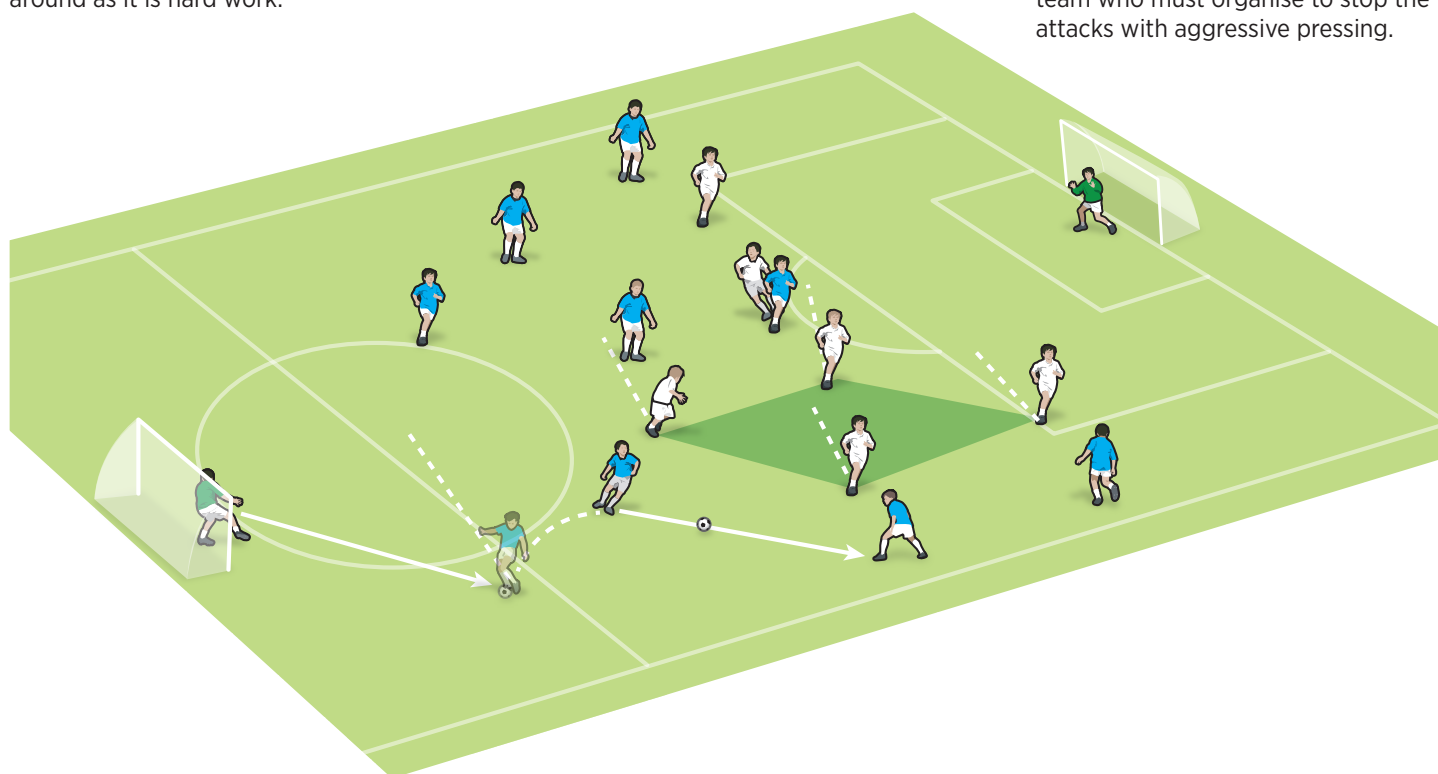
GAME: COUNTER PRESSING

CALL OUT

“One player goes to the ball” • “Support your team mate” • “Move across to cover space” • “Watch the angle of attack and respond”

1 Use three-quarters of an 11-a-side pitch playing a team of eight against a team of six with two goalkeepers – play for 6 minutes then change the pressing team around as it is hard work.

2 The team of eight must organise to attack the goal using the full width of the pitch – you need to concentrate on coaching the pressing team who must organise to stop the attacks with aggressive pressing.



3 Players work in the triangle pressing formation they focused on in the last activity.

4 If the team of six wins the ball they can hit the attackers on the counter.

5 You want to see the pressing team try to unbalance the attack and the attacking team to use the pitch to try and pass quickly past the triangle of pressers.

GAME PLAY

One player goes to the ball.
Players support the press.
Work rate must be high.

How many players do I need?

We used 16 players in this session but it is easy to adapt it to fewer players.

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

Making a slide tackle and a block tackle

ACTIVITY: TACKLING SKILLS

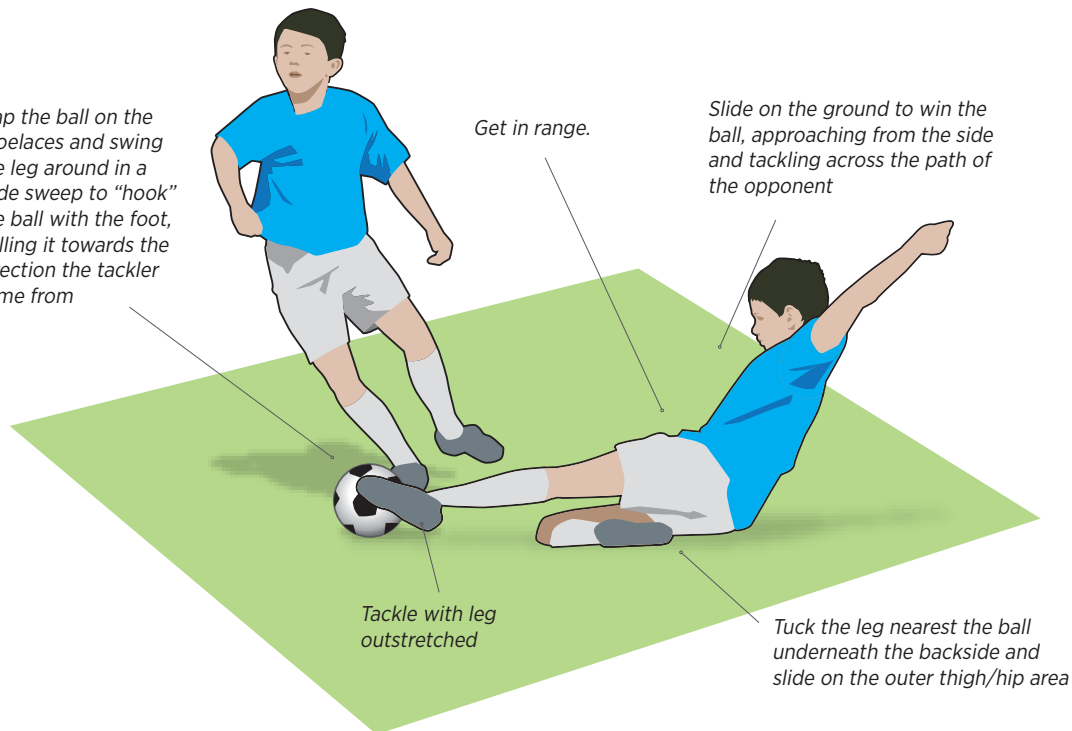
CALL OUT "Head over the ball" • "Bend your knees" • "Lock your ankle"

The slide tackle

1 Set players up in pairs with a ball between them and two cones that are 10 yards apart. One player passes to the other then tries a tackle to win the ball back.

2 The tackler must get on his feet quickly whether the tackle is successful or not.

Trap the ball on the shoelaces and swing the leg around in a wide sweep to "hook" the ball with the foot, pulling it towards the direction the tackler came from

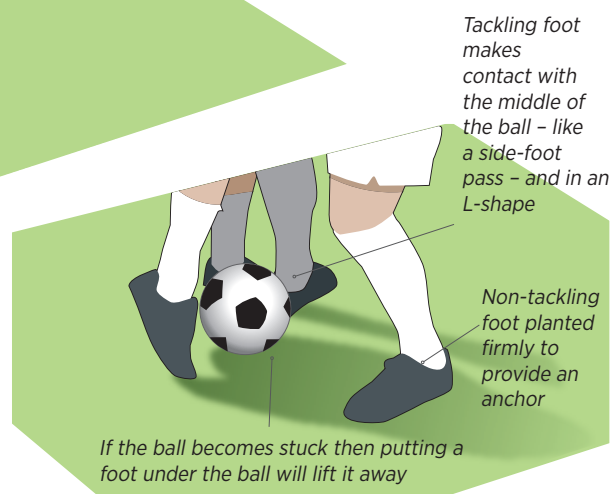
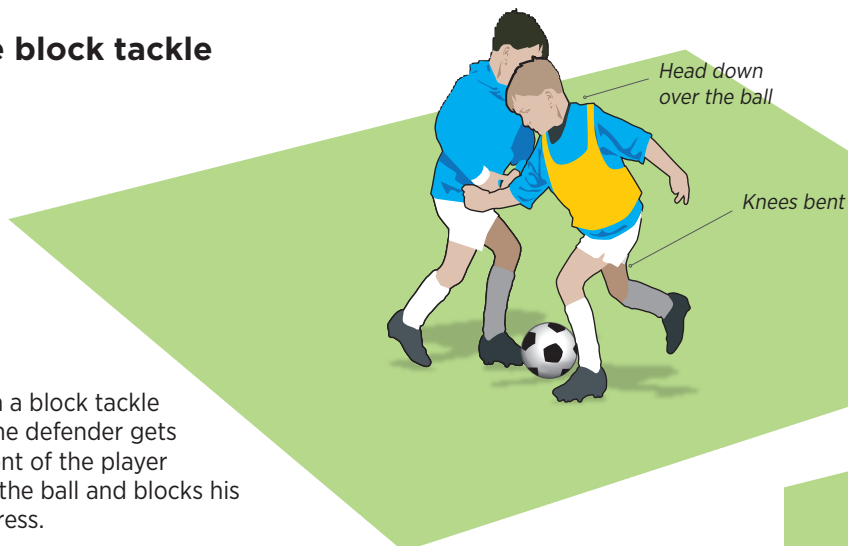


The block tackle

1 In a block tackle the defender gets in front of the player with the ball and blocks his progress.

2 Run through the block tackle with players in pairs. The two players face each other with the player on the ball at first remaining fairly static so the defender can make the tackle.

3 The tackling player should try to get the correct technique by going slowly through the checklist: head over the ball; bend your knees; lock your ankle.



How many players do I need?

Players practise in pairs.

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

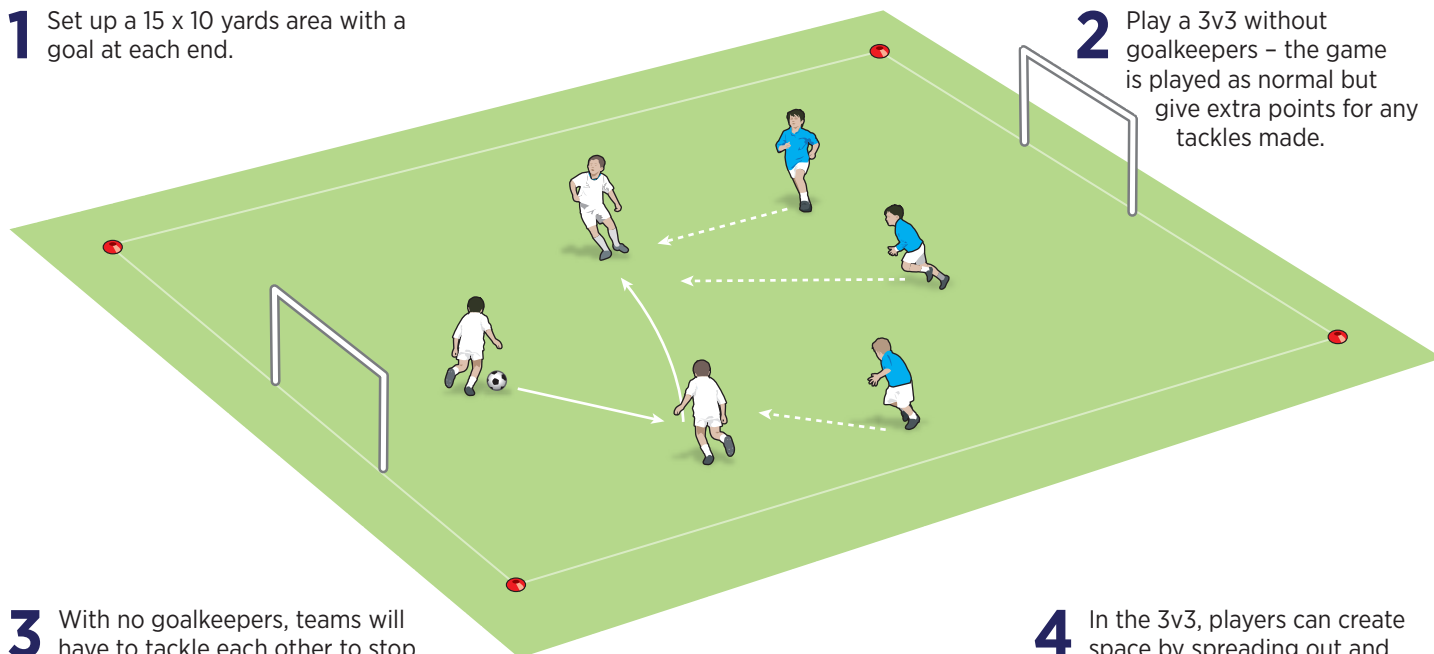
U14 | DEFENDING 5

Making a slide tackle and a block tackle

GAME: TACKLE IN A 3V3

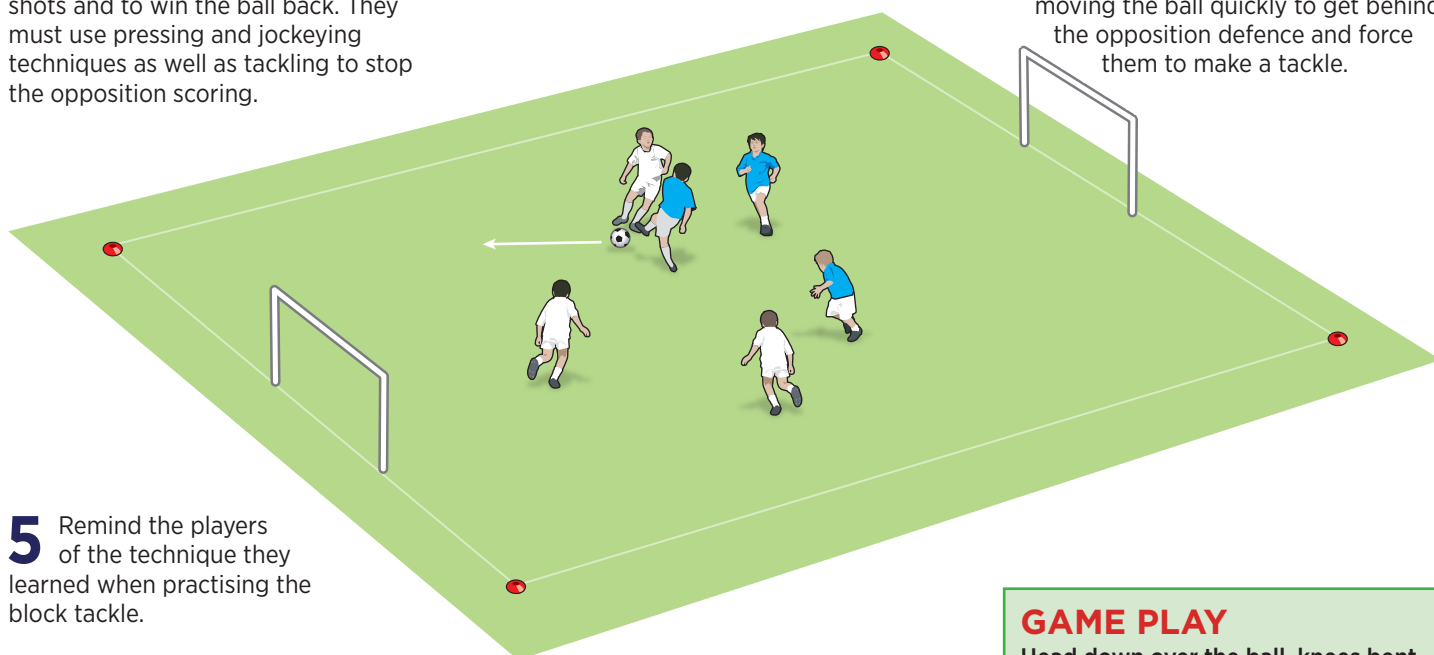
CALL OUT "Head over the ball" • "Bend your knees" • "Lock your ankle"

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



2 Play a 3v3 without goalkeepers – the game is played as normal but give extra points for any tackles made.

3 With no goalkeepers, teams will have to tackle each other to stop shots and to win the ball back. They must use pressing and jockeying techniques as well as tackling to stop the opposition scoring.



4 In the 3v3, players can create space by spreading out and moving the ball quickly to get behind the opposition defence and force them to make a tackle.

5 Remind the players of the technique they learned when practising the block tackle.

GAME PLAY

Head down over the ball, knees bent.
Firm standing leg.
The knee and ankle locked so the leg is strong.

How many players do I need?

This game uses six players.

Key	Player movement	Ball movement
	Run with the ball	Shot

EasiCoach

SOCCER SKILLS ACTIVITIES

U13-U14

RESOURCES

Parental checklist: U13 skills

NAME OF PLAYER:	Beginning	Developing	Mastering
DATE:			
BALL CONTROL			
1 Pass and receive over different distances			
2 Receive, control and pass			
3 Dribble and change direction with the ball			
4 Run with the ball and pass at speed			
5 First touch control			
ATTACKING			
1 Individual match day skills			
2 Pass, dribble and shoot			
3 Attacking build up play			
4 Penetrate the final third			
5 Score a goal			
DEFENDING			
1 Individual technique for recovery			
2 Full pitch pressure to win the balls			
3 Team technique for defending			
4 Full team pressing			
5 Making a slide tackle and a block tackle			

Notes: This assessment checklist is intended as a guide to progress only. Assess your child's progress against the criteria above for 12-year-olds. For example, is your child mastering the concept of dribbling and changing direction with the ball (for a 12-year-old)? Some skills will be mastered (for a 12-year-old) in a short space of time. Only the most able will master all the skills by the time they move to U14, 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: U14 skills

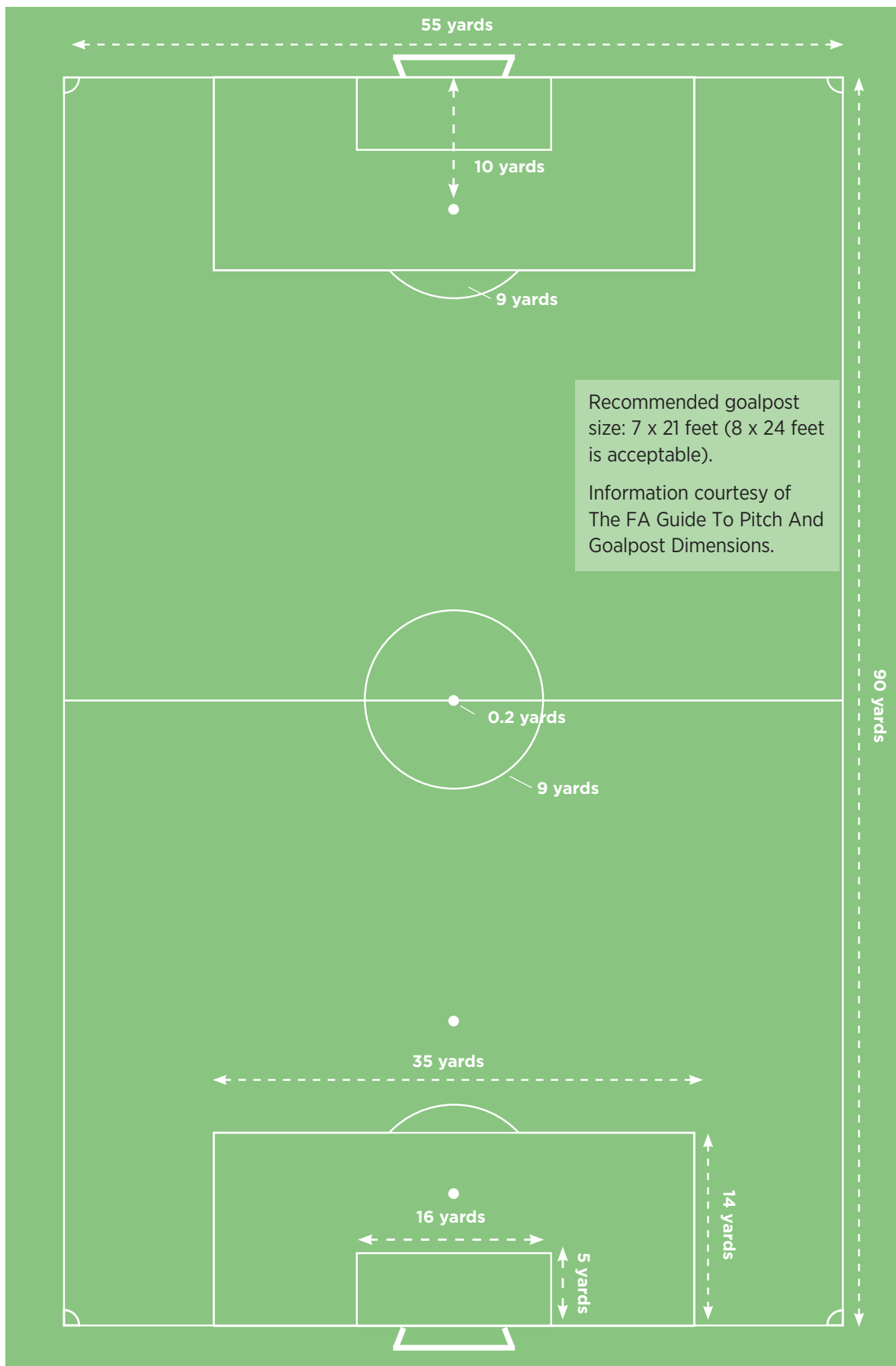
NAME OF PLAYER:	Beginning	Developing	Mastering
DATE:			
BALL CONTROL			
1 Pass 10 yards to a team mate			
2 Receive, control and pass			
3 Dribble with the ball and turn with it			
4 First touch control			
5 Shielding the ball			
ATTACKING			
1 Dribble with the ball and shoot			
2 Develop turning skills			
3 Attacking build up play			
4 Creative in the final third			
5 Score a goal			
DEFENDING			
1 Recover to a defensive position			
2 Block passing routes			
3 Defending in a group			
4 Control without the ball			
5 Making a slide tackle and a block tackle			

Notes: This assessment checklist is intended as a guide to progress only. Assess your child's progress against the three criteria above for 13-year-olds. For example, is your child mastering the concept of recovering to a defensive position (for a 13-year-old)? Some skills will be mastered (for a 13-year-old) in a short space of time. Only the most able will master all the skills by the time they move to U15, 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.

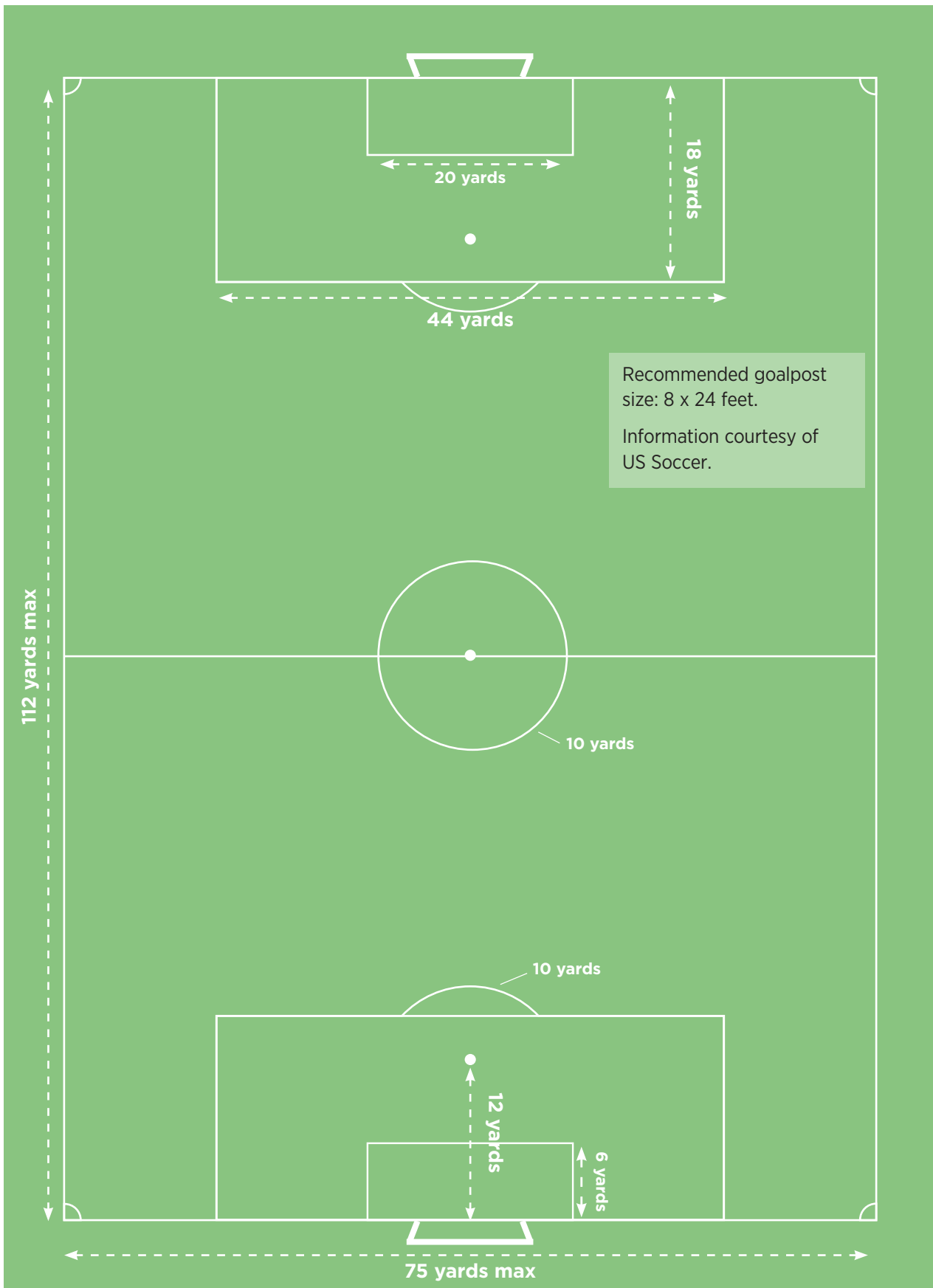
Parental checklist: U13-U14 skills

NAME OF PLAYER:	Beginning	Developing	Mastering
DATE:			
SKILLS			
1 180° Spin			
2 The Cruyff turn			
3 Volley			
4 First touch			
5 Jockeying			
6 The stop turn			
7 The feint			
RESTARTS			
1 Kick-off			
2 Throw-in			
3 Corner kick			
4 Free kick			
5 Penalty kick			
GOALKEEPING			
1 Correct diving technique			
2 Punching the ball			
3 Shot stopping reactions			
4 Quick reactions and positioning			
5 Gather a rolling ball			
6 Goalie wars			
7 Stop a ball at a striker's feet			
8 Stop the striker 1v1			
9 Footwork matters most			
10 Playing as a sweeper			
11 Survive the chaos			
12 Move and block			
13 Face the striker			
14 Goalkeeper kicking			
HEADING			
1 Correct heading technique in attack			
2 Correct heading technique in defence			
3 Fun heading race			
4 Win the first header			
5 Practise on your own			
6 Simple heading			
7 Have fun with headers			

FA RECOMMENDED PITCH SIZE U13-U14



US SOCCER PITCH SIZE U13-U14



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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, 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.

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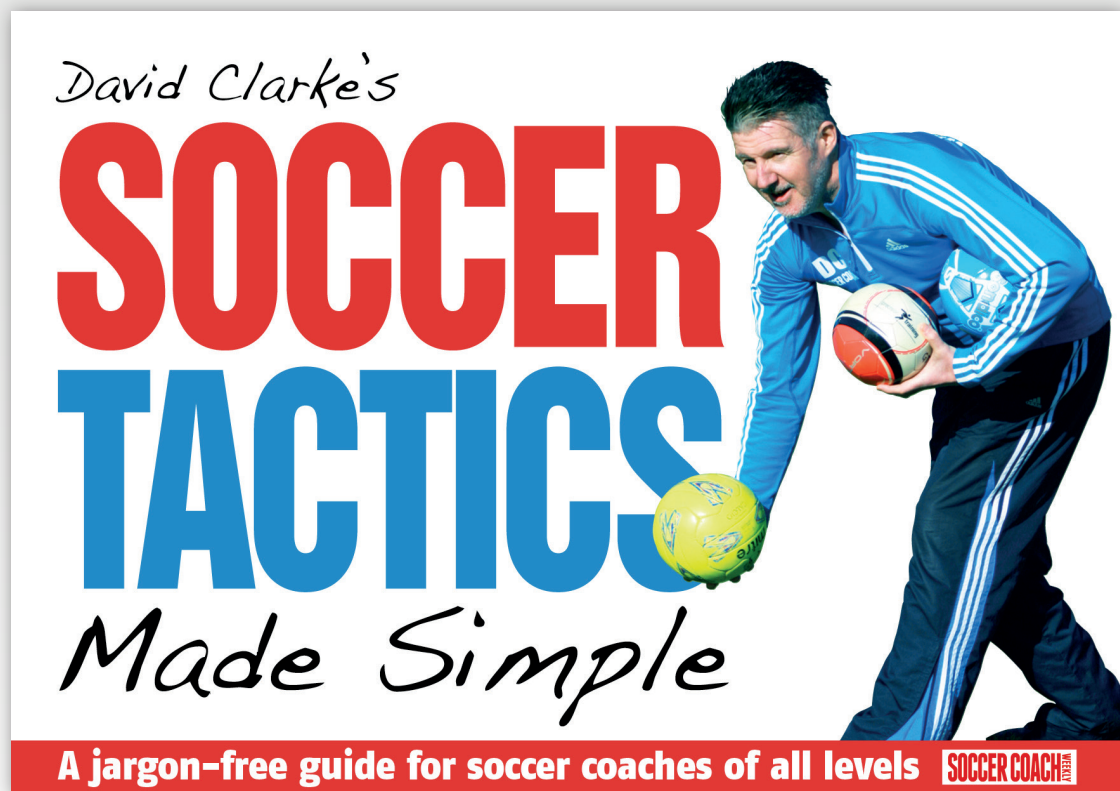
Work Your Strike Force
Pass, turn, shoot then move quickly to get back into position - this session encourages your players to get to the ball first and shoot, quickly.

5 Minute Technique: Dribbling
Each player has a ball - one needs to be in the center.

Defenders Into Strikers
Players like Thiago Silva and David Luiz can offer an attacking surprise.

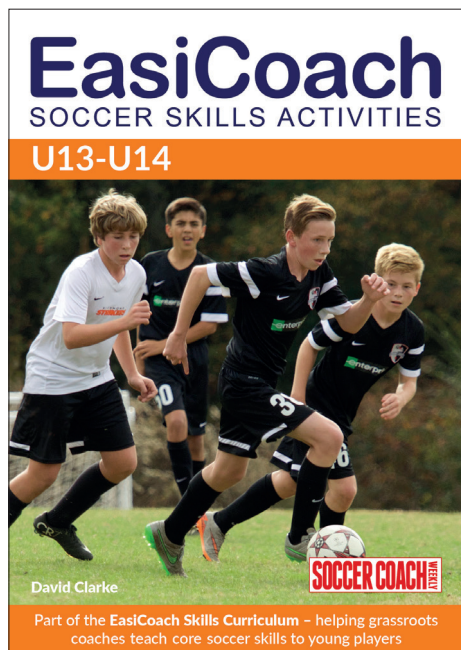
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EasiCoach provides ready-made, age-appropriate, safe training activities, set out clearly on a single page, that even a child could understand.

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.

